

The entire cover is framed by a decorative border of holly leaves and berries. The leaves are dark green with prominent veins, and the berries are small and round. The background of the cover is a light cream color with a subtle pattern of holly leaves.

HOLLY LEAVES

THE
CHRISTMAS
NUMBER ^{OF} THE

ILLUSTRATED
SPORTING &
DRAMATIC

1905

NEWS

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THE FIRST TEST OF A TRULY GREAT MAN IS HIS HUMILITY.—*Ruskin.*

'Modest Humility is Beauty's Crown.'

HUMANITY OF THIS LIFE.

Never to blend our pleasure or our pride with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.—*WORDSWORTH.*

To Live in the Hearts we Leave Behind is Not to Die. PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

His life was gentle, and the elements so mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man.'—*SHAKESPEARE.*

"I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom," he was able to say. He loved Manliness, Truth, and Justice. He despised all Trickery and Selfish Greed. . . . "Let us have faith that right makes right." . . . Come what will, I will keep my faith with friend or foe. Benevolence and Forgiveness were the basis of his character. His nature was deeply religious, but belonged to no denomination. Architect of his own fortunes, mastering every emergency, fulfilling every duty. As Statesman, Ruler, and Liberator, Civilisation will hold his name in perpetual honour.—*COL. J. C. NICOLAY, Encyclopædia Britannica.*

He committed to memory the following sublime poem, and his love of it has certainly made it IMMORTAL. He often said it was one of the finest productions of the English language, and would give a great deal to find out its author.

OH! WHY SHOULD THE SPIRIT OF MORTAL BE PROUD?

Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
Man passes from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around and together be laid;
And the young and the old, the low and the high,
Shall moulder to dust, and together shall die.

The child that a mother attended and loved,
The mother that infant's affection who proved,
The husband that mother and infant who blessed,
Each, all are away to their dwellings of rest.

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow,
In whose eye,
Shone beauty and pleasure, her triumphs are by;
And the memory of those who loved her and praised
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that sceptre hath borne,
The brow of the priest that mitre hath worn,
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,
Are hidden and lost in the depths of the grave.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap,
The herdsman who climb'd with his goats to the steep,
The beggar who wander'd in search of his bread,
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven,
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.



Here hath been dawning Another blue day;—Think, wilt thou let it slip useless away?
T. CARLYLE.

So the multitude goes, like the flower and the weed
That wither away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,
To repeat every tale that has often been told.

For we are the same our fathers have been;
We see the same sights our fathers have seen;
We drink the same stream, and we feel the same sun,
And run the same course that our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think;
From the death we are shrinking from they, too, would shrink;
To the life we are clinging to they, too, would cling;
But it speeds from the earth like a bird on the wing.

They loved, but their story we cannot unfold;
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is cold;
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers will come;
They joyed, but the voice of their gladness is dumb.

They died—ah! they died; and we things that are now,
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
Who make in their dwellings a transient abode,
Meet the changes they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea, hope and despondence, and pleasure and pain,
Are mingled together in sunshine and rain;
And the smile and the tear, the song and the dirge,
Still follow each other like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud.
Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

*As Time rolls his ceaseless course, Christmas after Christmas comes round, and we find our joys and sorrows left behind; so we build up the beings that we are.
What makes a Happy Christmas? Health and the things we love, and those who love us.*

AND SUCH IS HUMAN LIFE—SO GLIDING ON; IT GLIMMERS LIKE A METEOR, AND IS GONE!

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"HOLLY LEAVES," Christmas Number of the Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic News.

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When the Roots are not Healthy and Strong, or when they are affected by Germs, YOUR HAIR Will Not—indeed, **CANNOT**—Grow THAT IS WHY NOTHING CAN BE ANY GOOD FOR

HAIR is FALLING OUT EXCEPT CAPSULOIDS, PREMATURELY GREY,

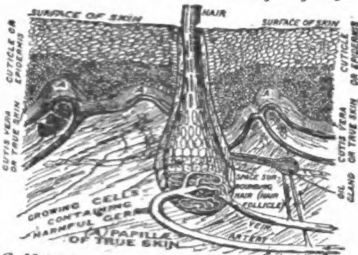
because the harmful germs which injure the hair can only be gotten at through the blood, and the only remedy which can reach them through the blood is CAPSULOIDS. It is utterly useless to rub stuff on the scalp, because it cannot get down to the germs. CAPSULOIDS contain nothing which can in any way injure the stomach or any other part of the body.

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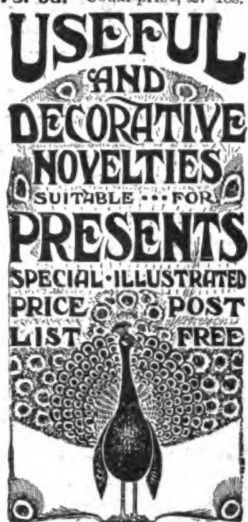
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With Special Coloured Plate:
"GOOD-BYE, MY LADS!"

December, 1905.
Price ONE SHILLING.



SWEET ANTICIPATIONS.

From the painting by Frank Dadd, R.I.

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TO BE WON THREE TIMES

By Eden Phillpotts

Drawings by Fred. Pegram



I.

THE girl kept her face in her handkerchief; the man strode up and down the parlour and flogged his leggings with a riding-stock.

"By God!" he said, "if I had the worm here, I'd order him down on his knees to beg your pardon ten thousand times; then I'd take him out of your sight and—"

He made his whip screech in the air and terrified "Peter," a fox-terrier, into preliminary yelps of uneasy anguish. For the dog understood whips—nobody better—but he was not for the moment conscious of having earned any unfavourable attention.

Frances Huxtable began to dry her eyes. The howl of the terrier had done more than the eloquence of the man to soothe her spirit. She had a sense of humour, and her pet's alarm tickled it. But she was soon tearful again.

The man looked at her hungrily, and longed to have his arms round her.

"I'll state the case, and you can tell me if I'm wrong."

James Ryall, farmer, of Okehampton, sat down opposite his cousin, and assumed an impartial aspect.

"It stands thus. Old Billy Yeo, of Holsworthy, has a son, young Billy; and young Billy thinks he'd like to be a doctor. Young Billy is by way of being a sportsman, too, and rides to hounds, and so on, and wastes his father's money."

"His father liked him to do so."

"I know better. No sane man likes to see his cash fooled away. Anyhow, young Billy starts to be a doctor, and goes to St. Mary's Hospital, in London. Well, after three years of it, he meets a girl by the name of Frances Huxtable at a garden party, and he has the cheek to fall in love with her on the spot; then he gets an introduction to her people and all the rest of it. Finally he offers to marry her, and she accepts him—little knowing the thing he is."

"We were to be married when he qualified."

"Exactly. Well, he takes seven years instead of five to get qualified—being a fool."

"Not a fool, Jim. His natural gifts were great—so his professors used to tell him. But he was very lazy."

"Anyway, you waited like patience on a monument for him to get a pass degree, and at last he did scrape through. Then old Billy buys him a partnership in his native town of Holsworthy, and you, naturally, expect he'll come and marry you. What happens instead? His visits grow fewer and fewer, and his letters grow cooler and cooler. Then yesterday came that—"

He pointed to a lengthy communication at the girl's elbow. It was creased and torn. A close inspection might have revealed certain blots not of ink, where tears from pretty eyes had clouded the cruel words.

"Not to mince matters, the brute chucks you. He can't think of any possible excuse for such a damnable thing, so he adds insult to injury by telling a lie over it."

"He feels that in a rough country practice he must have a stronger woman—a country girl, who understands country life better than I do. He fears the life at Holsworthy would be too great a strain on my health, which he reminds me is delicate."

"Delicate"! Since when was it delicate?"

"I never knew that it was."

"You're as strong as a pony. 'A country girl,' indeed! What are you? Isn't Exeter the country? One would think you'd been born in London and didn't know a sheep from a pig."

"He wants somebody to drive him about, I think, and look dashing in his dog-cart."

"I'll make him look dashing presently!"

"He thinks I am a sort of a feeble, croquet-playing girl, I suppose. He ought to know better. But perhaps I am—only it's lawn-tennis, not croquet."

"Listen to me. He must have his jackdaw eyes on somebody else—somebody with more money. That's it! Don't cry about him. Don't think of him any more. You shall be revenged; I'll swear to that. He shall smart for this to his dying day."

"I hate him—I hate the memory of his cruel voice and his glittering boots and his—everything!"

"I'm glad to hear it," said the farmer, "because you'd be a jolly poor-spirited girl if you didn't. Now he's got to be paid, and I'd dearly like to have the pleasure myself. Give—"

He was going to say "give me the right to do it," but he stopped in time. Though of a bluff and burly exterior, and short of speech as a rule, Jim Ryall was a gentleman, and just now love sharpened his natural delicacy.

It was not the moment to offer himself to this sore heart.

"Give—me time to think of the right thing to do. He's treated you like the cad he is. We must remember that he is a cad, and punish him as a cad ought to be punished. If you think a mere thrashing—"

"Don't talk of such things, please."

"You're right. It isn't a thing to talk about. He's jilted the belle of Exeter and the best girl in the county—because she couldn't drive round to his patients, or stop and hold the horse, perhaps, while he was indoors killing 'em!"

"It isn't that. I know the real reason perfectly well."

"Do you? I wish you'd tell me."

"Because I'm old."

"Old! Twenty-four old?"

"I'm older than my age."

"You're a bit of heaven!" he growled. Then, feeling that it would be well to depart, he did so—abruptly.

When he had gone the fox-terrier heaved a sigh of relief and jumped upon the table, beside which Frances sat with her head laid dependently on her arm.

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"He doesn't want me, Peter," she said.

Peter put his head on one side to consider this startling assertion; then he concluded that it was a case for sympathy and comfort. So he ventured respectfully to lick his mistress's cheek.

II.

MR. WILLIAM YEO had done a very dirty thing, and knew it; but he justified the action to himself after a fashion. It was not that he had his mind upon another woman, but that he became suddenly impressed with the wisdom of not marrying at all. A man of seven-and-twenty can afford to wait. He had been engaged to Frances Huxtable since she was seventeen, and not until a genial examiner in an after-dinner mood at last let him get through his "final," did he ever consider seriously the meaning of a wife. Then, when faced with the near approach of matrimony, he "refused," as his sporting friends remarked. Liberty was sweet; horses were dearer to him than his own kind. When his father bought the youth a half-practice in his native town, Billy decided that marriage for the present would be a failure. Moreover, Frances Huxtable seemed not the right woman, when he considered his future life as a sporting country doctor. She neither rode nor drove. She was fond of music and art. She sketched very cleverly in water-colours. He told himself that, after living all her days in Exeter, life at Holsworthy would bore her to distraction. He made himself suspect that she was not strong. His father and mother sided with him from purely selfish motives. While single, Billy the younger might continue to live in the parental nest—a circumstance the old people much desired.

In person Billy was slight, dark, rather good-looking, and of a very perfect build for his favourite pastime. He liked to be regarded as an expert in things equine, and affected the attire and ambitions of that class. He owned a good horse or two, and his famous Sally B., an iron-grey six-year-old mare, had won for herself and for him some local renown.

While waiting for this steed, we first make his acquaintance. Business had called young Yeo to Okehampton, and he was about to depart again. He stood at the door of the "White Hart" and drew on his gloves. Another man was also waiting for his horse, and Billy had been trying to avoid him for some time, for he knew James Ryall very well, and also the wealthy farmer's relationship with the Huxtables. Now Ryall approached, and the young doctor prepared for unpleasantness. To his surprise, however, the other showed no animosity. He shook hands, remarked that the weather was bad for roots, and then turned his attention to Sally B., who now arrived with Ryall's own horse.

"Is she entered for the Union Cup?" he asked.

"Rather!"

"You've won it twice, haven't you?"

"Yes—with her both times, of course. She'll romp in again. People round here can't drive, even if they had decent stuff in the shafts."

"It's a great art to show a horse at its best."

"I'm wondering if the Union will run to another cup when I've won this outright."

"It's a certainty, then?"

"Look at her," answered Billy. "Do you know anything this side of Bristol to beat her?"

"She's a beauty, no doubt. I wish I was as certain of getting home first with my pen of yearling ewes."

Yeo climbed into his dog-cart, Ryall mounted his hack, and they departed together.

Billy was relieved to find the other so amiable, and presently he ventured on to delicate and personal ground.

"I want to say a word about Miss Huxtable, Ryall. You're related to her, and you're a sportsman and can understand. I got a letter from her mother that oughtn't to have been written. Frances didn't write to me herself—only sent back a few things—presents, you know. I hope you haven't been prejudiced against me. You ought to hear both sides."

"That's the only proper way, certainly, when there are two sides," admitted the farmer.

"Well, it wouldn't have been fair to her. She's not a country girl. She's all for art and music and that. Can't ride, can't drive, frightened of horses. And I'm afraid she's not very strong. Her uncle—her mother's brother—had to go abroad for his health. You wouldn't understand about heredity and all that, but we doctors have to go into science a good deal. Well, Holsworthy would have been death to her. Honestly, I think so. No art, or music, or anything there. What are hunting, and fishing, and shooting to her? When she came last year to the Okehampton Show and saw me win the Union Cup for the second time, all she cared about was the colour of the leaves on the trees round the ring! She ought to marry an artist, or a clergyman, to be really happy; and I hope she will. For me, you see, with my life before me, it's essential that I should take a wife who can enjoy country sports and handle the ribbons, even if she don't ride."

"Of course—most essential."

"Don't suppose I am saying this selfishly, though. I'm thinking of her, not of myself. She's a dear little thing, and—"

"Leave her out. I know what she is."

"Well, as I say, it's for her good."

"I'm sure you're right there."

"For her good I asked her to release me. Honestly, I've felt very sick about it,

and, if I'd been a selfish man, I'd have kept her to her bargain and mewed her up at Holworthy, without pictures or anything. But I want her to be happy and free."

"Freedom's a fine thing, no doubt."

"I'm very thankful to have had a chance of clearing myself with you, Ryall. As a man of the world, you'll understand. Try and make her forgive me."

"Yes, I will."

"I shall always be her very good friend. I miss her frightfully."

"Very generous of you to say so."

"And—and I hope your yearling ewes will win. We shall meet in September at the Show, if not sooner. I suppose you don't know anything new in for the Union Cup—nothing to touch Sally B.?"

Ryall considered.

"I've heard nothing as yet," he said.

The men parted, and Billy went on his way in great good humour born of relief:

While the farmer jogged seriously homeward, his mind full of a grand problem.

III.

THREE months elapsed between the meeting of the men and Okehampton Agricultural Show, but during the interval both were extremely busy. His patients, however, did not suffice to fill Mr. William Yeo's mind, and an emotion in many respects painful began to creep over it. Secretly he called this sensation by the high-sounding title of "remorse"; in truth he was merely conscious of having made a bad mistake, and now sincerely he regretted it for very selfish reasons. Not until Frances Huxtable went out of his life did the young man's mean intelligence grasp the truth of all that she had been to him. Now he remembered it, and felt the lack. He missed her letters exceedingly. They had always put him on such good terms with himself. He recollected her steadfast belief in him; her brave encouragement, when he was "ploughed" for the fifth time; her messages, so full of hope and love. There was another side to the situation, too. A man cannot throw a girl over and expect the secret to be kept intact.

Frances, indeed, breathed no word of her wrong; but others were not so reticent. Mrs. Huxtable had a tongue and a grievance; she was an Okehampton woman herself, and so it came about by a natural process that Billy's orbit was aware of certain circumstances. Holworthy girls proved exceedingly shy, and, albeit his native place, the return of the native, as a full-fledged medical practitioner, by no means created that favourable attention Billy and a fond mother had expected.

To be brief, the young man was now conscious of having made a very great mistake, and already he began to wonder if it was too late to retrieve the position. His immense self-confidence led him to suspect that it was not, and his mother held the same opinion. By an accident, a week before the Show, he learnt that Frances and Mrs. Huxtable were stopping at Bowden Farm, James Ryall's place; and, after some deep thought, he decided to visit them there. But even Billy's impudence broke down before this ordeal.

He actually started, then—a mile from Bowden—changed his mind. "I'll wait for the Show," he thought. "They'll be sure to go, to see if Ryall's sheep do any good; and then, after Sally B.'s pulled off the cup and I've won it outright, I'll go round to them. I shall be a bit of a hero after that, and they'll very likely feel flattered."

This programme pleased him, but circumstances modified it.

The great day came, and Billy, with his parents and friends, appeared early at Okehampton. Sally B. and a new dog-cart had arrived over-night, and the doctor's first care was to go down to the stable to inspect them. The mare had never looked better. Then Billy went up to "Oaklands," where, by kind permission of the gallant owner, the meeting was held. The ring was set in a green place surrounded by fair woods, and the little show, with its tents, flags, and grand stand, stalls, booths, and pavilions, lay snugly in this forest glade. The militia band rattled a noisy measure; the country-folk poured in. A steam thrasher on exhibition puffed and panted and tormented the artistic eye with its crude and hideous blue and yellow.

Along the stalls clearly defined odours of horses, cattle, and sheep met the nose. Over the kine a sweet fragrance hung, and straight-backed, gentle cows stood, ignorant of the honours they had won or failed to win. Red calves, bright in the coat as new-fallen chestnuts, bleated together; noble bulls breathed mightily hard by, and one little beast, but five months old, stood beside its sire—a veteran with a front like Jove's, when he swam away with Europa. The infant bull was a tiny facsimile of his father, and promised to be a credit to the giant beside him. Already, albeit a baby, he had the lordly air of invincible courage and the grand neck and sulky eyes of an entire male—qualities quite lacking from the humble, cow-shaped steers in another range of stalls. The mares with foal at foot came next, and many stood to admire the mothers and children. In the tents a hum of talk rose, and people blinked as they came out of their shady depths to the sunshine.

The work in the ring had already begun, and two dapper little men were judging the

hacks and hunters. Their keen eyes penetrated the horses like Röntgen rays. They seldom differed. From walk to trot, from trot to gallop, the classes went, and they followed every movement. Anon they themselves would solemnly mount, trot, gallop, and lowed every movement. Then they felt down forelegs, touched the heaving flanks, and wound up by considering. Then they felt down forelegs, touched the heaving flanks, and wound up by ordering saddles off, that they might the better judge. They were always cheerful, smiling, imperturbable, and showed the genius of specialists in a high form. They lived by their knowledge and understanding of horses. Nor did they lack for humour. Sometimes they invited a rider who showed much daylight to "get a little nearer his horse"; sometimes they exchanged professional asides, which greatly entertained those who heard them. They were working hard and maintaining their lofty reputation under the public eye as men of credit and renown in hack and hunter circles.

Billy Yeo bought an official catalogue and turned to the cup competition. He read as follows, but got no further:—



"Then I'd take him out of your sight and—"

“DRIVING CLASSES.
OPEN COMPETITION

FOR THE UNION SILVER CHALLENGE CUP.

(To be won three times before becoming property of the winner.)

Present Holder: William Yeo, Esq., Jr., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., Holsworthy.

CLASS 28.

Mr. Yeo. Iron-grey Mare, Sally B., 6 years.

Miss F. Huxtable. Chestnut Gelding, Flying Fox, 5 years.”

Billy stuck fast at this entry. There were eight other horses in the competition, but he had no eyes for them. His jaw fell, his hands went down with the catalogue in them. A bad-tempered man on a bad-tempered hunter, coming disappointed out of the ring, nearly ran over him.

Friends presently met the doctor, and he questioned them concerning Flying Fox, but nobody had ever heard of the horse. James Ryall, however, was able to give him some information.

“Yes, that’s my cousin, Frances. A nice little gelding. I got him for her at Taunton, as she took a great fancy to him. She’s so keen about ‘em you know.”

“Keen about ‘em! Horses?”

“Rather! Funny you never found that out. You’ll see her, I expect, presently.”

“Who’s going to drive her horse?”

“Why, she is.”

“She is! Great Scott! She can’t!”

“Not like you. As you said three months ago, nobody really knows how to handle the ribbons here but yourself. Still, for three months’ work, she’s not bad.”

“Who taught her?”

“I didn’t. I’m no good—only a rough and ready farmer. Joe Masters of Plymouth taught her.”

Ryall mentioned about the best professional whip in the country.

“But her nerve. She had no nerve. I’ve seen her shiver and turn pale when I was driving.”

“What a poor compliment to a swell like you! She won’t turn pale to-day—or shiver either.”

Billy was agitated, but not so much that he perceived a certain contemptuous irony in the farmer’s remarks. Now Ryall, who was on the committee, returned to the ring, and the doctor, meeting his own party, had to escort a mother and two rather uninteresting maiden aunts round the show. They were not attracted by animals, but paid much attention to the garden produce and gazed over the display of overgrown leeks and turnips, eschalots and runner beans, cabbages, and giant potatoes that appeared to be bursting their silvery skins in all shades from palest amber to regal purple. Light played over their silky “jackets,” and those learned in this vegetable declared that they would have done credit to a county show. From these commanding tubers Billy conducted his party to the fruit, where it spread in a splash of rich colours and exuded a fine fragrance under the cool shadow of the awnings. Red apples and mellow pears, plums, yellow and purple, peaches with the hue of health on their ruddy, mottled cheeks, grapes, white and black and blooming, green figs brimming with fatness, tomatoes, melons, and autumn leaves, all glowed in a scented colour harmony only disturbed by the staring white and blue cards that marked the winners. The dazzle

and gleam of scarlet and gold, russet and orange, mingled and melted together and made a triumph for Autumn.

The maiden aunts also lingered around the dairy produce. The butter attained to absolute perfection; a corn-coloured crust flaked deliciously over the cream bowls. Honey came next. It ranged from palest beer-colour to darkest tortoiseshell; and in it were caught and reflected stray sunbeams. The sections that took first prize were plump and lovely, well filled to the edge, with just a glint of amber light showing through the translucent wax.

But there was no room in Mr. Yeo’s mind for milk or honey. One thought filled it: that the girl he had jilted was about to enter into open competition with him for the Union Challenge Cup. It took his wits until the luncheon hour to grasp this extraordinary fact. It spoilt his meal and rendered him restless. He had made up his mind to speak to Miss Huxtable if he saw her, but she did not appear. A half-bottle of champagne braced Billy, restored his egotism, and altered the point of view. Frances was doing a very unmaidenly thing, surely. Of course, girls did drive their own horses in public competition—still, she deserved to be well beaten, and he would

do it. Then he began to wonder what sort of horse Flying Fox might be. He escaped from his family after the speeches, and entered the official tent. The Union Cup appeared on a pedestal, and some men were admiring it. The trophy stood nearly two feet high, was solid silver, and wrought in the usual style. A garish design of conventional flowers surrounded the bas-relief of a trotting pony in a dog-cart. Seven previous competitors had won it, but only Yeo had ever succeeded in a second win. Now it remained for his name to be inscribed for the third time. Then the Union would have to find money for a new challenge cup.

Cheered by the opinions of those in the tent, Billy at last proceeded to a quiet corner under the trees, where his mare was waiting for her turn. He helped his man to harness her, looked to his own toilet, put on his gloves and presently trotted into the ring and



“If I’d been a selfish man, I’d have kept her to her bargain.”

joined a procession already walking round. Cheers greeted Sally B., and the little judges smiled upon her as upon a familiar friend. The new dog-cart looked very stylish also, and threw a perceptible shadow over the more homely traps about it. But Sally B., and not the dog-cart, had to be judged, and the little men began critically to examine the other competitors that they might see whether anything worthy to hold a candle to the iron-grey was entered. A useful lot they were, and one or two pleased the judges, but nothing showed to much advantage beside Billy’s steed. Then, as they began to move, the last competitor appeared, and Yeo saw a bright chestnut, in the handsomest cart that had ever twinkled with gossamer wheels round that ring. Frances Huxtable was driving, and driving perfectly. “Another and a louder roar” make Flying Fox prick his ears a trifle, but a word from his mistress steadied him. He joined the procession, and a great hum of excitement went up round the ropes. People strained forward; men shouted to their friends; a movement marked the row of figures in the grand stand; because one glance at Flying Fox told even tyros that this was to be no walk-over for the famous Holsworthy mare.

With a grand dog-cart behind him that had cost as much again as the doctor's, Flying Fox slipped along, and his driver, in a neat grey coat, grey gloves, and grey bowler hat, sat impassive, her eyes ahead. Her whip was in the socket, her hands well down. No girl ever drove a fine horse to better advantage, and the exceeding goodness of the gelding's temper was as apparent as the quality of his blood.

The judges were all alive in a moment. Round and round they turned. For a time there was no sound but the thud, thud of the trotting horses, and the jingle and jolt of the carts over the grass.

Then, one by one, the steeds were stopped, until only an iron-grey and a chestnut remained. The last doubt swiftly vanished. Flying Fox was faster, a better mover, and more symmetrical than the mare. Some even declared that he was as far ahead of the defeated iron-grey as she herself stood above the rest of the competitors.

Among the first to realise this fact was the owner of Sally B. Whatever else he might not know, Billy understood a horse when he saw it. Frances had beaten him badly and won the Union Cup.

Universal applause and a salvo of hand-clapping rewarded the decision as a member of the committee doffed his hat, approached Miss Huxtable, and handed her the blue rosette.

With the ribbon on her whip, she drove once swiftly round the ring, then disappeared; while Billy had no spirit even to do this, and, accompanied by a red rosette and a very sick heart, walked his defeated heroine away.

Many in the grand stand knew a part of the meaning of this scene. Girls stole sly

You drive magnificently. Don't think I'm sore about it. You shattered a great hope and ambition; still, I'm proud to be beaten by you."

"Hopes and ambitions do get shattered in this weary world. I hoped—the cup was going to be pretty, but I never saw anything uglier in my life."

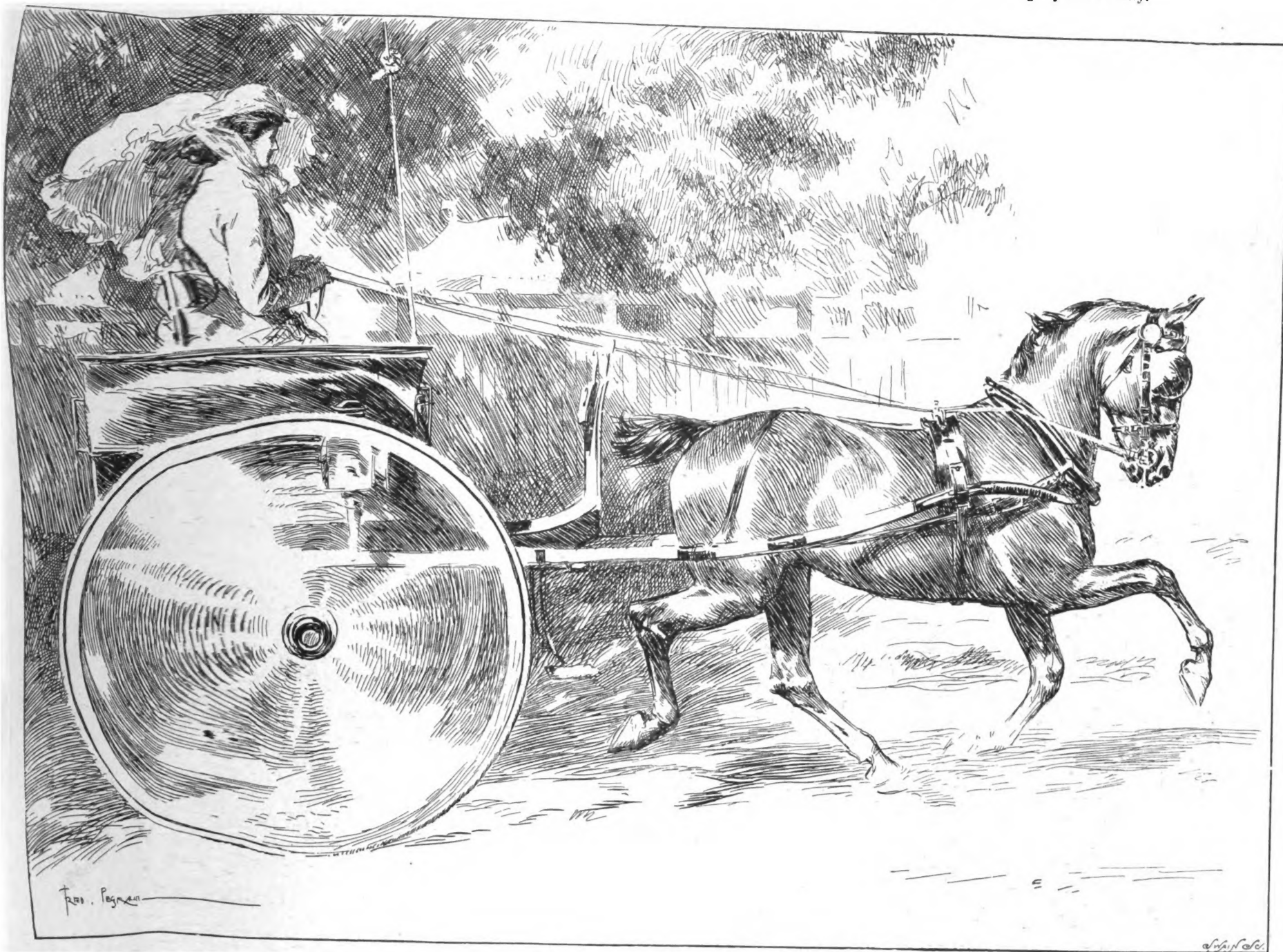
Billy felt that it would be wise to strike while the iron was hot.

"To your artistic eye, I daresay it looks a feeble thing. But I coveted it. I longed to win it outright. Never mind. That's a small matter compared to other hopes and ambitions. I've done wrong, and confession is good for the soul. I'll be frank. Whatever else I may be, nobody can say I'm not a sportsman, and I know when I'm beaten well enough. You've beaten me all round. I'm wretched—a failure—eaten up with remorse. Yes, 'remorse' is the word. I've treated you damnably, Frances, and well I know it. If a whole lifetime of atonement would weigh in the balance against my egregious conduct, I would willingly make it—most willingly and proudly. Any penance you can think of I will gladly undergo—anything—if you will only forgive me. It's hard for a proud man like me to say these things; still, you see, I'm not ashamed to confess. I've made the mistake of my life, and I'm bitterly sorry for it, and I implore you to forgive me."

"Of course I forgive you, Mr. Yeo. Everybody makes mistakes. Surely I was quite as much mistaken as you were?"

"Then you forgive me! How like your big nature to do so! To think that you can pardon a cad and a brute not worthy to tie your shoe-string."

"We can't help being ourselves," she said, vaguely but sweetly.



Few noticed Frances drive off the ground with her mother.

glances at the pale, crestfallen doctor; men openly rejoiced at his downfall, and gave three cheers for the winner.

A member of the committee met another.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," he said. "Thank the Lord the cup's not gone. Fifty guineas saved!"

The excitement of jumping competitions now increased the numbers at the ring side, and few noticed Frances drive off the ground with her mother.

Later in the day their host returned home to Bowden, and with him he brought the Union Cup.

"Your name will always be alongside his now, whether you like it or not!" he said.

IV.

A WEEK afterwards Mr. Yeo called at Bowden. He drove over with Sally B., and he took his defeated mare purposely—to increase the pathos of the situation. Fortune favoured him, and he was half-way up the long drive to the dwelling-house when Frances, on foot, appeared alone. He stopped, handed the reins to his man, and alighted. Miss Huxtable greeted him pleasantly, and smiled when she bowed. Her terrier, Peter, remembered Billy, and barked a welcome of the friendliest description. This fact cheered the doctor, for he held it a favourable omen.

The groom trotted back to the entrance, and Billy and Frances were left alone.

"I wish to congratulate you with all my heart and soul on your splendid victory," he began. "I should not have believed it possible if I had not seen it. But, largely thanks to your splendid handling, that beautiful gelding smothered my poor little mare.

"And may I dare to hope that you will let—?"

"Bygones be bygones? Of course I will! We're sure to meet sometimes. Jim and I are always out of doors."

"Jim? Another horse?"

"No. Jim Ryall. We're going to be married next month, you know; but we kept it a tremendous secret. You're almost the first to hear it. Flying Fox and that dear little trap were his wedding present; and I'm learning to ride, too! And I do believe I love horses even better than water-colour drawing, after all. Aren't women changeable?"

Billy looked blank and stood quite still.

"Then I've given myself away for nothing!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

"You're the very last man to do that," she answered, and still smiled, while he stared dumb.

Five minutes later Sally B. was rapidly drawing the physician back to his own domain; and when night came an adoring mother, who knew his mission, inquired what success had attended it.

"She's engaged to that rich bounder, Ryall," he explained. "And, honestly, I'm rather thankful, for the woman has deteriorated terribly. She used to be so refined and sensitive—loved pictures and all that. Now, by Jove! her tongue's like a razor! So vulgar, I always think, for a woman to try and score off a man. Of course, they can't do it. What is it about horses that makes girls lose their refinement? We don't. Look at me. I've been mixed up with horses and hounds all my life, and yet, mother, I'm always a gentleman."

'T WIXT BIBLE AND SWORD.

Drawn by R. Caton Woodville.*R. Caton Woodville.
05.*

THE KILLING OF "SWEETWATER." *

By MORLEY ROBERTS.

Illustrated by A. FORESTIER.



He sobbed fit to tear the works out of himself.

I HAD come into Painted Rock from Ennis Creek in a Studebaker wagon, pulled by Jones' two mules, Punch and Judy, and, while the men at the store were making up my orders for the extra grub that would see us through shearing, I took a paseo all round the town. It had never seemed more peaceful to me, and I daresay that any tender-foot from the East would have thought it lacked all those elements of romance that he had expected to find. Pillsbury and Gedge, my two gambling friends, said that things were indeed dull.

"There don't seem to be a dollar in the hull City," said Pillsbury, with a yawn, "at least, I've not sot eyes on one for days. And as for excitement, there ain't any. It's so durned dull and quiet and peaceful that my nerve is givin' out, and I expect something horrid to happen; eh, Gedge?"

"It is a mighty remarkable fact," replied the long-haired Georgian, "that such a period of peace in Painted Rock is mostly broke up by someone havin' a sudden funeral. I reckon that solid peace gets on our nerves, and the want of gayness and money is tryin' to us, and those that have a stake in the City feel it. Oh, I'd not be surprised if the calm was broke up any moment."

I took so much pity on their sad estate as to inquire if they would have a liquor with me.

"I should smile," said Pillsbury, and we went into the American house and had something destructive and highly poisonous at twenty-five cents a drink. While we stood up to the bar and discussed the trying peace, a stranger looked into the saloon as if he were seeking someone there, and I saw Gedge's eyes snap.

"Who was that?" I asked, and Gedge stared at me with an odd far-away look.

"I was just tryin' to recall him," said Gedge. "I don't never forget a face, and yet somehow I can't place him."

"Why should you?" asked the bar-tender. "He's a stranger, sure pop. I saw him get off the cars yesterday, and I've been in Painted Rock nigh on to three years, and I lay ten dollars he hasn't been here durin' that time."

"Well, I've seen him somewhere, I'll take an oath to that on a stack of Bibles," said Gedge. "I've been around this locality mor'n three years, my son, and mebbe I saw him twenty years ago in Georgia. I never forget a face or an injury or a good turn done me, and somehow I hev' a solid based opinion that I've done more than passed the time of day with that melancholy individual that poked his head in here just now and took a look around these deserted halls."

We had some more poison at Pillsbury's expense, and then Gedge smote the bar with his open hand. We looked at him in silence.

"I've located that stranger in my unforgettable mind," said the Georgian; "I knew I should, and I've gotten him to rights. It's a mighty strange thing that he should turn up after all these years, and I wonder what he's thinking of as he wanders around."

He turned to us with an odd look in his face, and we knew there was a story coming. The bar-keeper filled up our glasses again at my nod, and I slid a dollar over to him while Gedge was getting the hang of his reminiscences. He sighed, took a liquor, and

poke. "His name is Smith, just Smith and what else I forget," said Gedge, "and he gave me the greatest surprise I ever had, and that, in my varied and not unremarkable career, is a tall order."

"What was the surprise?" asked Pillsbury. "Did he take you on at poker and kin you?"

Gedge shook his head solemnly. "I've yet to meet the man that can do that, and well you sabe it, Pillsbury. It ain't gambling by any means, but it was a surprise, and no fatal error. There's two and of great surprises accordin' to my mind, and one of them is when a man without y sand in his composition, as far as one can judge, suddenly develops sand and lays

it someone that is a terror. And the other kind of great and remarkable surprise is when a man, a brave man and a man that the hull camp respects, shows up as a coward and hasn't the guts of a chipmunk. That was the sad case with the very Smith that

put his weary-lookin' countenance inside this bar and took a casual look at us. I'm sorry to say that he's an Englishman."

I begged him not to trouble about his being a countryman of mine, and asked for the story.

"It was remarkable, mighty remarkable," said Gedge, thoughtfully, "but I'm havin' another struggle with my memory, which, as I said before, is a good one, but, as you may have observed before, a trifle heavy on the pull-off. For some reason that I don't sabe, I cayn't recall the name of the person selected by Providence to show us that Smith had imposed on the world by an outward show of grit. I wish I could locate him, and then I could pitch you the tale as easy as fall off a log."

He took another drink to grease his memory, which was one with a heavy pull-off, and stood thinking. He lifted his head at last, and then shook it.

"I'm a perfect sucker, I am," said Gedge, "of course it was Hale."

"What Hale?" asked Pillsbury, who began to show more interest in the story. "Not Bill Hale of Sweetwater?"

"That very same Hale," said Gedge, "and when I say that same Bill Hale, I mean a man that I hev no respect for, and a man that no one thinks of lovin' to the extent of doin' as much as go to his funeral when he final kicks."

"Agreed," said Pillsbury; "I never had no use for Hale, and his son is no better than his father."

"Nevertheless, though we hev no respectful opinion of Hale, it was him that made that same Smith take water and sit down and cry."

"Did he weep, actually weep?" asked his brother gambler.

"Real tears and sobs, most horrid and painful to see and hear, my son," replied the older sport. "The whole thing made me feel sick, and I was some sorry that I could not see my way to interiere and blow the roof off of Hale's head. I'll tell you how it was."

But before he began he desired the bar-tender to do his duty in the matter of poison. He swallowed his dose of nose-paint and took a breath.

"It warn't in the neighbourhood of the Rock, but over to San Antone," said Gedge, "for at that time the Rock was no more than a rock, and those damn fools, of which we are an important part, who reckoned that this City was goin' to be somethin', had not yet developed any such fatal deelusion. To be strictly ackerate, which is my aim, I jedge that Painted Rock had been heard of by six cowboys, five wanderin' lunatics, four ordinary fools, three surveyors, two brayin' burros, and one wise man who saw it and died. That is to say, it warn't known to any extent beyond the Injuns and greasers, and the Texas Pacific Railroad was reposin' as an unborn idea in the brain of the scoundrel that was at last ass enough to give birth to the unfounded notion that all parts of this holy terror of a State was equal worth the blood and bones of a white man. However, that's only my sore talk, because I've grown up here, and the Panhandle of Texas isn't what it was cracked up to be. This yer Smith was a pioneer in his way, and hed a hell of a reputation for bein' sandy with the Apaches or any other breed of Injuns, and there's men about to this day that will tell you that same and stand to it. He had a store in San Antone and one over to Dallas likewise, and was a man with the repete of hevin' made money. At times the quiet of San Antone got on his nerves, although it wasn't hell-fired quiet by any means, and killin's was frequent, and he would get up and mosey off somewhere in this direction, and maybe as far as the Staked Plain, where buffalo was plenty then, as you may judge. Then he would come back and sell stuff, and, as I said, make money. But about a year before his humiliation by the said Hale, he told me that a notion was growin' in him fast to go back to the old country for a spell. For it appears that Englishmen are the same as us in that way, and they pine for the land where they were born jest as if it was as fine a land as Georgia and not a down-trodden place with kings and queens in it. If any Englishman in the present company ain't pleased with my deescription of Britain, I hereby apologise and state that I'm not wholly serious. Well, Smith took this sad idea into his cabeza, and, after rakin' up an honest man (he came from Georgia, and I won't give his name away), he lit out for the old country and was gone nigh on to nine months. Durin' that period thisyer honest Georgian had a time collectin' debts at the end of a gun, but I'll say this for the galoot, that the debts that wasn't collected on time was few. And when Smith come back he was that pleased with me that he endowed me there and then with two hundred and fifty dollars over and above what the contract called for. Oh, he was an honest man and one that I liked, and he was tol'able popular; oh, he was tol'able popular. And I soon perceived that a change had come over him through this trip of his to the old country, and he let out what it was the very night he went over the accounts of the business with me. I noted that he was considerable gentler and softer in his ways, and there was a dreamy look about him, like as if some lady had taken hold of his little heart and given it a tender squeeze, and he soon let on that he had run plumb agin the greatest daisy of a girl that he had ever seen while he was over in your monarch-ridden country, and he said that her and him had fixed up to jine teams and pull across the flowery prairie of life while they two did live. For an Englishman and a storekeeper he was some poetical about this incident, which had happened to him for the first time, so that all his emotions were young and virgin, and some surprised me. He reckoned to sell out in six months, and go home permanent and put his pile into a business that the girl's brother was boss of, and that was how him and Hale came into the arena and locked horns and made the dust fly. Hale was always a bad man to deal with, and not what I should call honest, unless I went out of my way to tell a lie. But Smith was straight about money; as straight as a straight game. And I've noticed, by the way, that some of the galoots in business that are down on the gamblers are ready to run in a cold deck on a confidin' stranger with the best and worst of the gamblin' fraternity, of which me and Pillsbury are honourable members. And to go on, I don't sabe exactly the point that Smith and Hale fell out about, but fall out they did, and there was the possibility of a difficulty right there. Thisyer Hale has a gift, I don't deny it, and if it's a rare gift it is a mighty useful one. He could always smell out by instinct the man that was going to fight, and he smelt out that Smith warn't for some reason. Oh, it was a wonder to us boys, and we marvelled about it, for we hed reespected Smith considerable, and I was among them that did, and it sickened me to see the way that Hale walked over Smith. Being then like a young burro, and as full of conceit as a greaser with new bell spurs on, I never tumbled to the reason, and I grew cold to Smith and looked south when he was comin' west. And then one night the boys came and told me that Hale had slapped the face of Smith, and that Smith was sayin' nothin' about it. Well, you can believe me, I was clean clear flummoxed, and still I didn't tumble. You see, I wasn't married as yet, and Mrs. Gedge was at that time no more than one of the gals for whom I had a tender feelin' and as much respect as they forced me to hev. Though I hed bin some cold with Smith seein' the way he put up with Hale's want of manners before this, I went down to Smith's store and walked in to see what I could see. And what I saw was poor Smith, cryin' like a lost kid, with his head on a parcel of store pants. He sobbed fit to tear the works out of himself, and it made me that bashful and ashamed that I retired to the rear and saw him no more until this very day that he put his head into this saloon and never knew me. And that night (I'm tellin' you the truth, though you may stare and shake your cabezas till they fall off) he signed over all his business to this same Hale, and took the cash and departed for the down-trodden realm of England. He said good-bye to none, for the boys were some cold, naturally, ez they hed reckoned on him layin' Hale out, and were surprised

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While we stood up to the bar and discussed the trying peace, a stranger looked into the saloon. . . .

to a painful degree that he hadn't. For Smith had always bin a self-respectin' citizen, and they had hoped to attend Hale's funeral in their thousands to signify that they were not sorry. Hale wasn't popular. He wasn't 'a bad man,' but he was inclined to be bad with those that he could pick out, and a bad man in a quiet crowd is the most contemptible creation of heaven, accordin' to my gospel. And there you are. That's all the yarn and all there is to it. Only I'm some perplexed to know what has fetched him here and what he wants. I wish some that I spotted him when he put his head in here, and asked him to explain this sad mystery."

Then Gedge stopped and cooled his throat with something less harmful than Western brandy, and we also drank and were silent till Pillsbury said something.

"But, Keno, you threw out a dark hint that if you hadn't been a young fool, you might hev come to a sound conclusion as to what made this Smith so poor a thing when it came to gun-play with a man like Hale."

"I did throw out a hint on that point, I own," said Gedge, "and you are not as young as I was then, and ought to hev the sabe to spot the ace right off. It was the girl."

"The English girl he was to get wedded to?" asked Pillsbury.

"What other, my son?" asked the Georgian. "She made a coward of him."

"Do you reckon she said he warn't to kill no more people, or else she wouldn't come into the firm?"

"Nothin' of the sort," said Keno. "My notion is a simple one, and it is as clear to me as daylight. Smith was plumb crazy about thisyer girl, and wouldn't run no risks of not marryin' her."

"I see, to be sure," said Pillsbury, who was a bachelor and notoriously indifferent to the charms of women. "I see. It's as clear as mud. I'd like to see the female beauty that would hold back my gun if someone smote me over the cabeza. I'd rather be an honoured if shot-up corpse than be kissed and canoodled by the entire female sect with any pretensions to beauty."

had the sand to do as he done. I'm of opinion that Smith had something of the same sort of feelin' that I hed when he let Hale smite him. And I dew wonder some why he's out here agin and lookin', as you maybe noticed, some sad and miserbul."

"Perhaps his wife's dead," I suggested, and Gedge stopped suddenly. He looked at me with visible admiration, and I was much pleased.

"For an Englishman you hev uncommon bright ideas," he said. "I believe you have scored a plumb centre, and if you hev I'd not give one single solitary continental cuss for Hale's chances of survivin' the summer."

He shook his head.

"I wouldn't, that's a fact," he repeated. "I wonder if Hale is in town now. He mostly comes over once a week, as he has an interest in Beal's store. I'll find out."

We parted at the corner and I saw him walk into Beal's. I had my own business to attend to, and I saw no more of him till some hours later, when I was at Hamilton's, where I went for dinner.

Old bald-headed Hamilton introduced the subject of Smith the moment he saw me. He was obviously not a little excited, for he was one of the few who knew the rights of the story, and he hated Hale with all the fervour of a debtor who had no chance of clearing himself. He was deep in Hale's clutches, and Hale was a man of small consideration for the weak.

"I don't reckon to understand it, my son," said the old boarding-house keeper, "but I'm of opinion that Smith ain't come back to Texas for nothin' but the purpose of gettin' level with Hale."

"After all these years?" I asked.

"Why not?" replied Hamilton. "I've known a killin' to be postponed twenty years and come off after all. Oh, I'd rather be myself than Hale. For Smith's wife is dead, he tells me, and a daughter too, and there is a look about him that bodes no good to Hale. That's my notion, and I'll back it. Here he comes."

Smith came out on the verandah, and took a long chair and sat smoking.



I heard the sound of two quick shots.

"Well, I reckon Smith thought otherwise," said Gedge, "and as he didn't acquaint us with his reasons, and as I know he was a man beefore this unfort'nit incident, I hev a kind of notion that if we knew all we might say he did almost right, hard as it is to imagine it."

But Pillsbury shook his head sadly.

"I'm surprised to hear you talk so," said Pillsbury. Gedge did not answer, and a few minutes later he and I went away together, leaving the other gambler to think over the story. When we had gone a hundred yards, Gedge stopped and laid hold of my arm. He stared at me with his bright black eyes, and a queer smile stole over his face.

"Say," said he, "ain't Pillsbury a man that is blind to things outside of kyards? He has a mighty respect for me, and I'll not say it isn't justified, but I'll own to you that, years ago, a drunk cowboy over at El Paso kicked me, and then pulled a gun and ordered me out of the place, and I went as meek as a lamb. D'ye know why I done so?"

He looked as fierce as a trapped grizzly as he thought of this little incident.

"I'll tell inflammatory you," said Keno. "Mrs. Gedge was lying sick with the worst sort of rheumatism, and the doctor was there three times a day, shakin' his head over her as if she'd die. Was I to get into a difficulty in them circumstances? I ask anyone. I took my kickin' like a man, and, when the old lady was through the narrow part of Death Cañon, I told her about it, and she said that I was a man, and so I was. And I went out and found Mr. Johnny Cowboy on the plaza, and I pulled my gun and threw it down on the ground before him, and as he started to pull his I jumped him and took it away, and I sat a-straddle on his back and made him ride me round the business block of the town. There was a crowd to see the show, you bet, and on each street I stopped and explained to the crowd that why I hadn't killed him beefore was all on account of Mrs. Gedge, and, when we done the block, I took my fiery, untamed steed into the nearest saloon and stood him a skiful, because he was the only man who ever

"Hale's comin' to Painted Rock this night," said Hamilton, in a whisper. "He's been over to Big Springs, and will lay over here for a day. D'ye think a man should send him word that Smith is here?"

Whatever I thought would make no difference, and I declined to state what I thought or what my advice was. It is best to stand clear of things like this in all countries, and especially in the West. Smith sat on the verandah and smoked savagely, and as he smoked he chewed the butt of his cigar and thought. He did not speak, and never even looked at me, so far as I could see, till Gedge came over to Hamilton's in the evening. When Smith heard Keno's voice he looked at us with a start, and evidently recognised the gambler. Yet he made no sign that he knew him till Gedge walked over to where he sat and held out his hand.

"I'm glad to see you after all these years," said Gedge, and Smith looked at him hard.

"Truth?" he asked.

"Solid frozen fact," said Gedge.

They shook hands, and Gedge sat down by him.

"You've had trouble since you left?" said Gedge.

"I've had ten years' happiness, and now it's done," said the pioneer. "She's dead, old man."

"I'm sorry," said Gedge. They did not speak for some minutes, and then Keno said that his wife would be sorry to hear it. But old Smith did not know that Gedge had been married, too.

"Oh, yep," said Gedge, "and since bein' married I've understood what was a puzzle to me when you left the country, Smith."

They did not speak of Hale, but Smith knew what was in the other's mind. Keno told him the same story that he had told me in the afternoon.

"You understand," said Smith. "She was very delicate, you see, Gedge, and she

loved me dear, and if I'd been killed it would have killed her. That's why I turned coward and stood what I did."

I shifted my chair further away, and the scraping of the chair on the rough flooring attracted the old man's attention. He looked at me, and Gedge, who was very uncomfortable in his mind, introduced me as some diversion. We talked of the old days, of which I knew nothing, and the old pioneer told us some strange tales as we sat and smoked. But all the time Hale was in his mind. At last Smith spoke of him.

"What do you know of Hale now?" he asked.

"Nothin' to speak of," said Gedge, "but I reckon he has done well with his business."

"Is he any altered?" asked Smith, with an averted face. "Do folks speak well of him?"

"Not to any reemarkable extent. A mean man is a mean man, and don't give up his meanness, accordin' to my observation of the human race," said Gedge.

"I'd half like to hear well of him," replied Smith, in a curious hollow voice. "If I could hear well of him I think—"

"What d'ye think, Smith?"

But Smith did not finish his broken sentence. But he went on with another that was partner to the thought that inspired it.

"Is there any one that loves him, Gedge? Has he ever married?"

Gedge shook his head.

"Has he got a friend, any man who sticks up for him?" insisted Smith, as if he was anxious to be told that this was the case. I saw that Gedge followed the workings of the man's strange and overwrought mind, and he hesitated before he replied.

"I don't know everything about Hale," he said, reluctantly, "and I don't want to do him no injustice. He *may* hev a friend somewhere."

"But you've never heard of one?" said the pioneer, with a sudden savage snap in his voice that made me wince. "I'm glad to hear that, Gedge, for if I'd heard that he had one solitary friend in the State of Texas, or in the whole United States, I'd have started for England by the next East-bound express."

He looked at me once more, and then turned to Gedge.

"This young man knows my story, Gedge?"

Keno nodded, and Smith nodded too, and was silent for quite a while. When he did speak it was in a low, concentrated voice, which was hard to follow. He spoke as if he was speaking to himself.

"I ain't forgotten it. It has bin a red-hot sore on my mind all these long years, even when I was happiest with my dear, dead wife. She got to know of it, for I told her the truth once, when she thought I was wearied after the old life of the prairie. God knows that, for all her love, I did hanker some to see the sun rise up in these clean places of the earth, but it warn't that that made me restless and uneasy. Hale had a notion how it was with me when I was goin' back to marry her, and he played on it and let his native beastliness out on me, knowin' that I would do aught rather than die before I had lived. For then the love I bore her that is dead was all my life, and I never knewed that the time would come once more when the open earth and the big prairies of Texas and Arizona would call to me like a deserted child. I took the blow that he gave me, for, with things as they was just then, if I hed killed him, I'd hev hed to pay for it to the law; for I hed enemies, and at that time his father was a power in San Antone, and I was no more than an Englishman and the keeper of a store. And if he had killed me I was dead, and the blow would have killed her I loved better than my whole soul, and I took his blow and it broke my heart, and though I was happy I was miserable too, and it was in my mind always that I had been struck and had done nothin', I that had been on the frontier when Hale was a boy, and had earned a just name as a man who was no cur. And a year back my wife died, and I stayed because I had a little girl, and two months ago death took her too; and I went back home after buryin' her and packed up my things, and that very day I started for Texas. I said that I would seek out Hale, and, if he was now a good man, or one that folks loved, or if he had a wife or child that loved him, or if there was a man who stood up for him, I would let him go. I sought out all that I could find about him in Dallas, and in San Antone, and in Sweetwater, and here in Painted Rock, and I find no man has a good word for him, no, not one."

His voice died away into a mutter, and we knew that the hours of one man were numbered, unless he were favoured of fate or unless someone warned him.

And Hale came into town that night, and not a soul of all who knew told him that Smith was in Painted Rock, and that he was mad. I did not, for I did not know him and could not interfere, and Gedge did not because he preferred a mad Smith to a sane Hale, and the others did not for many reasons. And no one told the City Marshal, Ginger Gillett, because it would have been Gillett's duty to interfere and lock up Smith there and then. For those are the ways of the West, without any doubt. And the end of the story of Smith and Hale came that very night, not two hours after sundown, when the gambling saloons were filling up and the streets of Painted Rock were alive with talk and laughter. I did not see the end, but I heard it, and Gedge saw it and I came in time to see the dead man before he was dead. For Smith and Hale met face to face outside the American Saloon, in which Gedge and Pillsbury had their gambling lay-outs. And Hale did not know Smith, because the man had altered so much through his happiness and his grief. Those who saw them meet say that there was but little talk, and that the actual shooting was so swift that no one saw guns drawn till the shots were fired. But Gedge, who had heard that Hale was in town and had the ears of a creature of the forest, caught the first words from the inside of the saloon, and recognised the speakers. He dropped his cards quietly and came out. At that time I was fifty yards away, in the *Occidental House*.

Hale was now a big and burly man, and very powerful. His forehead was low and his mouth a close line, and there were signs of drink in his face to those who know the lesser signs. He came along the street as if he owned it, and it must be said he owned more than most people knew, for a man who lends money and makes it in quiet ways at a high percentage when times are bad, creeps behind the outward names of firms and fattens in the dark. That is why some did not tell him that Smith, who had sold out to him in the old days, was standing outside the *American Saloon* with his eyes blazing and his tongue still. They saw him and watched him, and though they stood clear they hoped for his death. And he came to where Smith was, and, as I say, did not know him. But Smith spoke in the tone of a challenge, and his voice brought out Gedge as he cried—

"Hale!"

And Hale stopped dead and turned and saw no one that he knew, so that he could not say who it was of the people about that had spoken to him.

"It was I who called you," said Smith, and then a dim perception of danger came to Hale.

And Smith spoke again in a high-pitched voice.

"Don't you remember Smith of San Antone?" he asked. And Hale did remember and perhaps he grew a little pale. Gedge said he did, but then Gedge did not like him.

"The last time you saw me," said Smith, "you struck me in the face, and I did nothin'. Do you remember that, Hale?"

Hale remembered: Oh, yes, he remembered now, and he knew that there was but little time to take his choice of action. He stood irresolute, and Gedge says his hands showed that he had no nerve, for they opened and shut, and the bulk of the man trembled. He stood and stared, and then he spoke, not like a man, but like a beaten thing that plucks up courage to pretend to courage as a last effort for life. And yet there is no saying that he might not have carried it off if he had followed his one chance of salvation to its end.

"Oh, to be sure, my old friend Smith."

His voice shook. More than Gedge say that, and yet he took a half-step towards his enemy. If he had laughed and gone right up to Smith, the old man might have broken down in his intent. So strange a thing the mind is! But at the first half-step the little pretence of courage failed in the man who had none. It was horrible to be confronted with this ghost of the past, and to see that this was a man who cared not for life. Hale stopped and his lip fell, and he turned—and ran!

I heard the sound of two quick shots, and, when I came to the *American Saloon*, Hale was within a quarter of an hour of death and Smith was sitting at a table in the saloon, with Gedge beside him.

"My wife's dead," said Smith, "and my child is dead too."

He is in the State Asylum now.



THE IDEAL.



THE REEL.

(Drawn by Fred Barnard, and reproduced by courtesy of "The Illustrated London News.")

"THE TURNSPETE."

Drawn by F. S. Walker.



"Of the Dogge called Turnspete, there is comprehended under the Cones of coarsest kind, a certain Dogge in kytchen service excellent. For when any meat is to be roasted, they go into a wheele, which they, turning round about with the weight of their bodies, so diligently look to their business, that no drudge nor scullion can do the feat more cunningly; whom the popular sort here call 'Turnspete.'" — "The Turnspete," by Dr. Caius, Physician to Queen Elizabeth.

N o. 6 5 3 4.

By W. PETT RIDGE.

Illustrated by GORDON BROWNE, R.I.



"I've got a very sensitive nose."

MR. DAYLE, of the Lost Property Office, sat at his sloping desk behind the screen when the station-master's boy peeped round; on hearing the movement he made a screen for his teapot at the side of the desk, and applied himself with great energy to the letters and unopened envelopes before him. Looking round after a minute of this work, Mr. Dayle recognised his visitor, and at once pushed his work away.

"Thought it might be your father," said the lost-property man, candidly. "You get more and more like him every day." The boy did not attempt to conceal his gratification, and, the better to act the character of age, inquired whether anything fresh had happened.

"No," said Mr. Dayle, taking off his spectacles and giving his cricketing cap a rub, "can't say there is anything fresh, my lad. Not even that brace of birds over there. Barwick."

"Yessir!"

"Put them pheasants somewhere out of the way."

"Right, sir!"

"I've got a very sensitive nose," said Mr. Dayle, scratching that organ with the wire of his spectacles. "Sometimes too much so. Told you about six five three four, didn't I?" The station-master's boy opened his eyes widely to express a negative reply. "I could have sworn I did!"

"Even if you did, Mr. Dayle," said the boy, politely, "I should be quite pleased to hear it again."

The incident, it appeared, happened at a period when Dayle had not achieved the proud title of Mr., and was, indeed, referred to as Whiskers, mainly because he possessed none. An energetic porter, all the more assiduous in the performance of his duties because a certain young lady, in service at Peckham, had derided railway officials as a round-shouldered, splay-footed set (she had a very bitter tongue when any dispute had occurred during the day with her mistress), expressing open preference for a scarlet-faced driver of one of Tilling's omnibuses. It seemed so degrading to be thus compared to his own detriment, that Dayle made up his mind to earn somehow or other a step in the service; he felt that if he could but announce that he was earning twenty-two shillings a week, then surely the Peckham young lady would be forced to look up at him with admiration and regard. The desire to bring matters to a crisis was the more acute in that the recent bombardment of Alexandria by Sir Beauchamp Seymour had given to Londoners a tempestuous wave of admiration for those wearing her Majesty's uniform. And a girl who could fall in love with a bus driver would fall in love with anybody.

Dayle was leaning on the worn deal counter one night, wondering what he could do to hasten the arrival of that much desired two shillings a week, when a man rolled across the station square with an indecision of gait which might

have been caused by the weight of a long bag. He appeared to be a naval man; at any rate, he wore very wide, flapping trousers, and the lady with him never ceased telling him to be a man and walk straight.

"Wha' cheer, messmate," he cried jovially, as he placed the stiff, long bag on the counter, "wha' cheer."

"None at all," replied Dayle, gloomily.

"Why don't you smile, then, and pretend you're happy?" said the cheerful man. "Sally, make him laugh!"

"Don't you go making yourself a circus clown, Jim Medler," she said, reprovingly, "when you've got serious work in 'and."

"Once I get rid of the body—"

"S—s—h!" she remarked, warningly. "You don't want everybody to know."

"Old man," said the sailor, in confidential whisper, "I want to leave this 'ere for two or three days. The idea is—"

"Two pence," remarked Dayle, shortly. He tore off two square tickets, stuck one by the corner on the bag, and gave the other to the man.

"And not dear," cried the sailor, approvingly. "If the pubs only charged in proportion now—"

"You're far enough gone as it is, Jim. What you'd do if the drink was cheaper, goodness knows!"

"And I know, too," he said acutely. "It's all very well for you; you ain't been millions of miles from the nearest pub for the last six months."

"Aving been a strict Band of Hoper," said the lady, shivering with pride, "ever since I was a gal of three, I shouldn't greatly mind if every public house was burnt down to the ground."

"My girl," said Medler, with solemnity, "don't you talk sacrilegious. When you're on your death-bed, as this old party was once—here he touched the long bag—"you'll be sorry for saying things like that."

"All this time that you've been cackling," interrupted Dayle, now white-faced with eagerness, from the other side, "you're keeping me dancing about and doing nothing." He turned and whispered to a colleague, who was shining boots, and told him he should want him to take charge of the counter directly.

"Ullo, old ship-mate," remarked the sailor, "I'd forgot all about you. How's the wife?"

"There ain't one," replied Dayle, curtly.

"And the children? They all ri', too?"

"There ain't no children, neither," said Porter Dayle. "How much longer you going to be finding that two-pence?"

"Urry, Jim!" said the sailor's companion, "when the gentleman keeps on asking of you! And where did all this blood on your wrist come from?"

Porter Dayle leaned half-way across the counter. The tattooed arm of Jim Medler certainly bore marks of great significance, other than the blue anchors and the word "Daisy" in capital letters crossed through, and a correction "Sarah" underneath.

"My girl," he said, winking, "p'raps you'll know some day what it is to have a bottle of something and no corkscrew. Chum," he remarked to Dayle, "'ere's half-a-dollar. Keep the change."

"Dare do anything of the kind," cried the lady with violence, to Dayle, "and I'll report you. Give me the one-and-ten to take care of for him."

"She's 'treasure," declared Medler. "She's woman in a thousand. She's faired flower that blows. For her dear sake I'd go the gallows with certain amount pleasure. I've been a bad lot in me time," said the sailor. The opportunity for a brief autobiography appeared to his bemused mind excellent. "I've stepped in and out of jolly near every trouble that there is, but never till now have I put myself within reach



"Mate," he said, tearfully, "never you go off the straight tack."

of the law." Here he wept, and the lady shook him. "Mate," he said, tearfully, "never you go off the straight tack. Begin cruising about in unknown waters, and you'll be on the rocks before you know it."

"I'll try to remember," said Porter Dayle. "Which way you going?"

"I'm on my way," replied the sailor, wiping his eyes dolefully with his singlet, "to the bottomless pit."

"But I mean now."

"Just at present we're bound for Limehouse. This is my pilot. Sally's my pilot, ain't you, old sort?"

"I'm the only friend you've got," retorted the lady, with acidity, "if that's what you mean, and we're going to Great Russell-street first. Come on now! We've been 'ere for howers, and your mother's waiting."

"A boy's best friend is his mother," he sang. Then he relapsed into desolation. "How can I face her with crime, crime—"

"Oh, come on," she said, impatiently; "it's give me the face-ache to look at you. Good-night, mister!"

"Don't open that bag," he wailed. "Don't go and—"

Porter Dayle threw off his cap and put on his unofficial bowler hat, snatched at his overcoat, and, putting this on as he gave a quick word to his colleague, hurried out of the door and along the passage after them. In the station yard the sailor hailed a cab, but the lady took him with a firm, policeman-like grip, and marched him up to the omnibus route. They then stepped on one going Holborn way, and the sailor shook hands with great show of affection with the conductor, delaying thus Porter Dayle, who, with his hat well down on his ears and his overcoat collar turned, followed them presently up the steps, the sailor calling nautical commands to the driver of the swaying bus. Porter Dayle, as he sat there watching the two, endeavoured to sort the tumultuous fragments of his thoughts and to decide on the best and wisest course. At first one thing only was clear, which was that all the credit in this affair should be his, to be shared with no one else. When the whole affair was settled and the criminals locked up, the General Manager would send for him and say, "Dayle, you are a smart, intelligent fellow, and the directors are proud of you. Oblige me very much by accepting an increase of four shillings a week," and, this done, no large-buttoned Tilling's driver, no man in more attractive uniform, would have any influence over the heart of the young woman at Peckham. But it would demand all his alertness, all his cool common sense, and Porter Dayle's only fear was that his stock of these virtues might not be equal to the unexpected demand. Necessary first of all to follow the two without letting them know that they were followed, to secure all the addresses, to discover accomplices, if any existed, and finally, all this done, to request the presence of the station-master at the opening of the long sack, No. 6,534, and call in the City Police to assist in identifying the body. This last part of the business Porter Dayle was willing to share with others; his courage would carry him far alone, but not so far as all that. At Mudie's Corner the two rose to alight, and Dayle went down the steps swiftly in front of them.

Porter Dayle, his bowler hat still well down over his eyes, followed, saw them turn back into Great Russell-street, and go to the door of a quiet house, which had shining little bell handles down the side as though it sometimes passed itself off as an organ. The woman pulled out one of the stops, and they waited. Jim Medler began to sing. Placing her hand over his mouth, she threatened that, unless he stopped instantly, she would leave him on the spot and get back to Limehouse.

"But I've got such good voice," he urged, showing again a tendency



... asked whether seven-and-six would hurt them



"Want this knife into you?" asked the man.

to weep. "Sides, if I don't sing when I'm cheerful, when am I to sing?"

"You've got to keep all your wits about you," she said, in a low voice, "that's what you've got to do. Make one of your silly blunders now, and you'll be in Tottenham Court-road police-station before you can wink."

"I don't want to be locked up," he whispered, "I've got strong prejudice against it. Give's a kiss and I'll be good."

She had lifted her veil, and was about to permit Medler to taste this joy, when the door opened, and she started back. A tall, burly old gentleman with red hair stood there, spectacles on forehead.

"Ah, my friends!" he cried, changing his expression and holding out both hands. "Is it," here he lowered his voice, "is it all over?"

"No," said the young woman, curtly, "there's been nothing paid yet."

"Easy to do, easy to do," he cried. "Come in and dell me the story."

"Is there any lush?" asked the sailor.

She pushed him into the hall, and the door closed. Porter Dayle, stepping across, saw that the name above the second bell-pull was "P. STRENINI," and, anxious to conduct everything with precise regularity, he wrote the name on the back of an envelope; noted also the number. Half an hour later the two came out, Mr. P. Strenini seeing them to the door with great courtesy and shaking hands with each. The woman hailed a cab, and on saying "Number Thirty-Seven, Chalcot-street, Limehus," the cabman asked whether he might not as well drive them to Siberia whilst he was about it, declaring that Siberia was quite as much on the direct route to his way home as was Limehouse. She made an inquiry and the cabman thought for a moment, and then, replying by another question, asked whether seven-and-six would hurt them; the sailor responded that seven-and-six would not hurt them, but

that he would guarantee to hurt the cabman if he would but step down from his box and put up his dukes.

"Call at all the pubs," shouted Jim Medlar. "Miss one and I'll never forgive you."

"Drive straight there without a stop," ordered the lady, "or else you don't get no fare."

Porter Dayle, with all the information duly noted, walked back to the station a proud and important young man. He felt that he held all the reins, and that to ask for assistance would be but to court disaster; the reins kept in his own hands, he could drive the affair to a satisfactory termination. Gave orders to his colleague (who, being his junior in the service by a fortnight, had to obey) that No. 6,534 was on no account to be given up without his permission, and went home to spend a brief and sleepless night. His was the late duty turn that week, but the following morning, to the amazement of all, he arrived there with the early men, taking their chaff with stolidity and declining to give any but the Chief an explanation, and giving him one which was not quite true. He went once or twice to look at 6,534 propped up in a corner, but had not the courage to approach it very closely. His reward came when, at about half-past ten in the morning, whilst eating furtively near the counter a combination of breakfast and lunch, he saw coming across the square Mr. P. Strenini, in a broad-brimmed foreign-looking hat, the cape of his Inverness coat thrown back to show the scarlet lining. Mr. Strenini threw down the cloak-room ticket 6,534.

"Loog sharp," he said.

"Seldom look anything else," remarked Porter Dayle, trembling with excitement "What is the article? A portmanteau or a hat-box?"

Old Jewry bestirred itself directly that the word "murder" had been whispered. Old Jewry promised nothing, but prepared a written photograph of Mr. Strenini and set telegraph instruments to work. Old Jewry begged that the matter should now receive no interference from outside hands, but should be left entirely to those practised in the art of detection.

"You get off back to the station," said Old Jewry, with a pen over each ear and a pencil between its teeth, "and leave all to us."

"And won't you—"

"Now, now," said Old Jewry, in an appealing way, "for goodness' sake don't go dictating to us on what we ought to do. We know."

A rough-looking man in creased new second-hand clothes, that made no pretence of fitting him, was waiting impatiently at the counter for Dayle's return, declaring that time to him meant money, that he was not prepared to kick his heels there to the following Christmas.

"Ere at last, then!" said the impatient man. "Been away for your 'olidays, or what? Did my old messmate, Jim Medlar, leave a bag here last night?"

"Come inside," said Porter Dayle, "and let's talk it over."

"Did my old messmate, Jim Medlar," he repeated in a shout, "leave a bag here last night? Yes or no?"

The Chief came forward in order to contemplate the progress of affairs. Dayle winked at him importantly. The long tarred sack stood in the corner, where it had been placed the previous evening.

"Ah!" exclaimed the man. Before he could be stopped he had whipped out his



"Haf I not the right to deal if I like in curoisities?"

"It is a sack! You have but to compare the noombers——"

"Did you leave it 'ere?"

"My friend, I did not."

The other men gathered around to witness the contest. Porter Dayle waved them aside.

"Can you identify the contents?" asked Porter Dayle.

"Not precisely."

"Let's see—what's inside?"

"I prefer not to have it opened here," said Mr. Strenini. "I send for it instead."

"You've got to have it opened 'ere," said Dayle, importantly. "And what's more, in the presence of a City consta— 'Ere! 'old him, 'old him!"

One thing to shout this command, another thing to obey it. Half-a-dozen porters on the square ran at the sound of the order in half a dozen different directions, catching innocent passengers, whose worst crime was that they had given themselves the narrowest possible margin to gain departing trains, arresting these and having presently to endure the frank contempt of their inspectors. Meanwhile, Mr. Strenini had disappeared down the passage marked "Way in," and Porter Dayle found himself possessed by a horrid fear that he had spoilt everything by a premature threat. He held serious consultation with his Chief, the Chief did not hesitate to denounce him as a woollen-headed countryman possessing the intellect of a hen; after five minutes of this Peckham seemed as distant as Yokohama. Decision was that Dayle had better go ("like an arrow," suggested the Chief) and give full description of Strenini at Old Jewry, that a search might be instituted for him; requesting at the same time the presence of a detective to assist in the formal opening of the sack.

"And look out," said the Chief, caustically, "look out that *you* don't get locked up over this job yourself."

knife, which he wore on a string, cut the tight fastening at the neck of 6,534, and, as the others stood back prepared to be horrified, tipped out some of the tightly-packed contents on the floor. High and enormous boots, tarpaulin hat, small bar of yellow soap, pack of elderly cards, portrait of a lady by a Port Said photographer, some bits of coral.

"According to the rules——" began the Chief.

"Shut up, chatterbox," ordered the rough man, "you're all talk. There's no getting a word in edgeways." He threw the things back into the sack, and re-tied the string. "Open that door!"

"But," said Porter Dayle, "you can't take that away, you know."

"Can't I?" said the man, putting it on his shoulders.

"Besides, I—I was given to understand it contained a body."

"Oh," said the man, lightly, "I've got that one. He took mine and I took his, you see! We was both a bit fresh last night, and consequently I ain't in the best of tempers this morning."

"Then look 'ere! You just go and fetch the other one before you touch——"

"Want this knife into you?" asked the man.

"No!" said Porter Dayle, frankly, standing aside at once. The man went off.

"Now!" said the Chief, "now you have been and gone and done it."

The contrite Porter Dayle nodded a regretful assent. He bent his head still lower when a man from Old Jewry, arriving and being placed in possession of full details, added a strenuous declaration to a similar effect. The man from Old Jewry, having exhausted his list of condemnatory adjectives, became calm, and pointed out to Dayle that the responsibility for any delayed action on the part of the City detectives would be his, and his alone; mentioning also that he was acquainted with certain colleagues quite capable of making a sufficient number of errors without the help of

such—here the Old Jewry man repeated some of the derisive adjectives he had already used—as Porter Dayle. Another man from Old Jewry came hot with running to say that Mr. Strenini had been captured just inside the City border of Holborn, and they both took poor Dayle off, Dayle's fellow porters prophesying optimistically that he would not get more than seven years, that when he came out it was possible he would be wiser, and certainly that he would be older. As he crossed Cheapside with every constable eyeing him suspiciously, Dayle wept.

"Here is the fool man," cried Mr. Strenini, breaking off from a torrent of excited, mangled English. "Explain, peeg of a porter."

"You ain't clear of it yet," remarked Porter Dayle, threateningly. "You're in for this mess, mind you."

"Haf I not the right to deal if I like," demanded Mr. Strenini of the men around him, "in curiosities?"

"Curiosities?" repeated Dayle, "what are they?"

"You ought to know," said the Superintendent of the detective department, kindly. "This gentleman says he bought a certain article from a sailor——"

"And paid for eet," wailed Strenini.

"Which the sailor obtained by some scheming out in Egypt, and——"

"And," cried Strenini, "I lose the money, I lose the mummy. I lose my liberty, I lose everything."

"If we only knew the first sailor's address, sir," remarked the Superintendent, "it might be put right even now with an apology all round."

"I know where he 'angs out," cried Dayle, suddenly. "Come and see if I can't do the right thing for once in my life."

"Mummies," said the station-master's boy glibly, when the story was finished, "are human bodies embalmed with myrrh and spices, and dried after the manner of the ancient Egyptians, Mr. Dayle."

"So I learnt, my lad, so I learnt," he said, thoughtfully. "Afterwards!"

"Hope you didn't get into trouble over it, Mr. Dayle. I don't think you were very much to blame."

"Well, I don't know," he said, thoughtfully, emptying the leaves from his teapot into the coal-box. "Looking back, I can see times when I thought meself clever, and I wasn't. I can only 'ope there were times when I didn't think meself clever, and I was!"



"Weigh Ho! Sing Weigh Ho! unto the green holly,
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE GHOST.

By KATHARINE TYNAN.

Illustrated by P. H. TOWNSEND.

THE air of the room chilled him to the bone, although a rosy fire leaped and sparkled in the grate, and outside the day was St. Luke's Summer.

"Ugh!" he said. "How cold it is, Cousin Juliet!" and he shivered.

Juliet D'Arcy stood up by the marble mantelpiece. She was nearly the height of the low-ceiled room. She was a ripe, fair, golden-skinned girl, and her trailing gown of orange-tawny consorted well with her coiled fair plaits and the apricot bloom of her cheeks.

"I am never cold, Cousin Humphrey," she said. "But a good many people have made the same complaint about this room. It ought to be warm, for there is a fire here nearly all the year round. There are cellars underneath this part of the house, too, so it ought to be dry."

Except for the dank chill of the atmosphere the room was cheerful and pleasant, walled in old chintzes with a pattern of sprawling cabbage roses, carpeted in blue with a design of rose-wreaths. Every one of the chintz chairs and couches was comfortable; the foot sank in soft-piled rugs; there were all sorts of precious *bric-à-brac* about on shelves and in cabinets. It was lived in, too. There was an open book on a little table; another was heaped with books and magazines; an embroidery-frame was pushed into one corner; Lady D'Arcy's work-basket stood by her low chair.

"It is perhaps the autumn damp," Humphrey Aylmer replied.

The windows were not yet shuttered, although a shaded lamp had been lit. Between the silk hangings of the windows the park outside showed, heavy in mist. By day the prospect was a fair one. Miles and miles of coppice and undulating land; a herd of

her mouth—"It is hard on her to have three such enormous girls. You can't imagine what yards of material it takes to make us our dresses."

"I can only realise how excellent the result is in your case," he said.

The wooing and the winning were going to be very pleasant, he felt. She was as wholesome and delicious as a ripe fruit. Of almost too opulent beauty for her twenty years, she yet carried her youth in the swift lightness of her movements, in the shyness of her eyes. He liked to play with the shyness.

"You have been growing beautiful," he said, "while I have been growing old and ugly, burnt as black as a crow by the sun, tanned by the sea-wind. Do you know, Ju, that I am growing grey-haired?"

"Oh, no," she said, in a shocked way. "Why, you are not so much older than I. Nine years. When you were at Grayfell you were nineteen and I was ten, and I adored you. Quite young people are grey-haired nowadays. Old—oh, no! Nor ugly! You are very far from being ugly, Cousin Humphrey."

He liked her vindication of him against his own half-jesting words.

"You were a dear little girl—at ten," he said, and was pleased to see the shy perturbation of her face, which he thought to be for him.

She had looked up in a startled way at the window. Someone had passed it, coming along the terrace to the hall door. Aylmer, sitting with his back to the window, had not noticed the passing figure. There was a tinkle of the hall-door bell. The maid came in and announced "Mr. Hugh Young."

The owner of the name followed, a tall, fair, young giant, inconveniently big for the



There was a rustle of silk; something brushed against his shoulder.

deer feeding, ready to go like the wind at the sound of a step; in middle distance the river, winding in and out glade and coppice; dim on the horizon a range of distant hills.

His eyes came back to his young cousin. She was pleasanter to look upon than the October afternoon landscape.

"Aunt Lucy still likes the Lodge?" he said.

"We are still in love with the Lodge," she answered. "It is such a dear little home-like house, so different from Grayfell among its melancholy moors. And this garden country is enchanting. You will see for yourself to-morrow. We have never regretted Grayfell. Then, this is so much nearer town, and . . . there are pleasant neighbours."

There was the slightest hesitation as she concluded the speech. He looked at her kindly. How she had grown up, little Ju! She was quite a beauty. And in time Mary and Kate, her sisters, would be as handsome. He knew his aunt's wishes about him and Juliet. The girl was heartwhole, ready to be wooed and won. He had come with no unwilling mind to the wooing and winning, yet now that they were alone together he was in no haste to begin.

He had an idea that their being alone was his aunt's doing. It was Sunday afternoon, and she had found something she must do in her own room upstairs. The other two girls had gone out to visit a friend. A Sunday quiet was over the house. One imagined the servants reading their Bibles in their own premises. If a foot went along the corridor it went with a more subdued tread than of week-days. The Lodge, amid its gardens and park, felt the suspended animation of the great town like a heaviness.

"When I saw you last, Cousin Ju, you were only so high," he said, watching with lazy pleasure the lights and shadows of the fire on her face and her velvet gown.

"Before you went away?"

"Before I went away. I had no idea I should be gone for so long that you would have had time to grow completely out of my memory."

"I have grown, haven't I? Poor mamma!"—a smile played about the corners of

low room crowded with furniture. Juliet introduced the two men. Aylmer got up, remembering suddenly that he had not had a pipe since lunch. He would smoke one on the lawn outside, while the light yet lingered.

He had two little rooms, just across the narrow corridor, to his own use. They and the drawing-room were divided from the rest of the house by an arch; they were, in fact, the oldest portion of the house, and dated back some centuries.

His fire had been lit already in his bedroom, and had burnt up brightly; but there, too, the air struck coldly.

"It ought not to be so cold," he said to himself; "I wonder if, by any chance, there is water in the cellars! The place smells like a grave."

He found his pipe and tobacco-pouch, and went out. He had an idea that, if he stayed out long enough, Mr. Hugh Young might take his departure. While he walked up and down the maid-servant came and closed the outside shutters of the windows. The mist of damp spread whiter and whiter across the park till the shapeless masses of the trees were swallowed up in it. He wished Mr. Hugh Young would go. What the deuce did the young puppy mean by coming in and monopolising Juliet? At the firelit hour, too, when he had been feeling so comfortable, so complaisant about that plan of Aunt Lucy's. It was time for him to give up roaming and settle down; quite time that he should give a mistress to King's Oak. And where could he find a girl sweeter, more wholesome, more stately, yet with a young charm, than his Cousin Juliet?

He began to fidget at length. Would the fellow never go? What was Aunt Lucy about? He wondered if Juliet often entertained Mr. Hugh Young *tête-à-tête*. To be sure, she had been left to entertain him. But that was different; they were cousins.

At last he shook out the ashes of his pipe violently on a green paling, and went back to the house. There was no one in the drawing-room. It was in obscurity. Someone had taken away the lamp, and the fire had sunk to a little red glow.

A maid came along the corridor.

"If you please, sir," she said, "Miss Juliet took the lamp into the library for a minute. She will return directly."

He answered that it did not matter, and, sitting down to the piano, he began to play. That was something which had never deserted him, music and the solace of music. He was a born musician, and, with his hands on the keys, he lost consciousness of all that irked him or might irk him. He forgot himself, where he was, everything but the music.

As he played dreamily, passing from one thing to another, now improvising, again playing from a well-stored memory, he had suddenly the oddest sense of a presence in the room. There was the rustle of silk; something brushed against his shoulder; something lighter than thistle-down rested on his hair; touched his lips.

His hands fell from the keys. As the music ceased there was a sound like the winnowing of softest wings: something grey like the twilight went out by the open door; but, though it was shadowy, it had the eyes and the hair, the slender, sylph-like figure of a young girl.

He sprang to the door and caught sight of her, as he believed, entering the little suite of rooms that was his. He followed and found the first room in such dim firelight as the drawing-room had been. He fumbled for a candle and lit it. There was an arch between his bedroom and the other room, which was a dressing-room. He had hardly yet made acquaintance with it, since he had only come to the Lodge in time for lunch.

As he went in, holding the candle high above his head, he noticed the bitter chill in the fireless room. There was something cold and clinging about it. He looked round the room. It had little low windows, sunk deep in cavernous walls. The blinds were down over them. There was the same comfortable chintz-covered furniture which was all over the house. There was a big wardrobe. He opened the doors of it. There was within only emptiness. For the rest nothing could be more home-like than the aspect of the room. His bath was set ready for next morning, in the middle of the floor; the Lodge did not boast a bath-room. His dressing-gown was hung over the back of a

her greatest beauty. It was the more alluring because it was mixed now with something shy and mischievous.

"Cousin Humphrey," said she, "mamma, who has been asleep, I expect, all this afternoon—when she wants an afternoon nap she is always supposed to be reading or writing letters or turning out drawers; anything at all but having a nap—mamma would be very angry with me if she knew that I had been entertaining Mr. Hugh Young instead of you this afternoon."

"She need not know it so far as I am concerned, Cousin Ju," he answered, "and I congratulate you on your choice. He is a very fine specimen of young manhood."

At that she blushed rosily red.

"It has not come to a choice yet, Cousin Humphrey," she said.

"I should say it has on his side," he answered, enjoying the sight of her blushes. He forgot that a little while ago he had not felt so benevolent.

"He is a subaltern in a cavalry regiment," she said. "He only exists there by favour of his aunt. She means him to marry a rich girl. And I—you know that mamma's income dies with her; she has saved nothing—I ought to marry a rich man. Hugh talks of giving up the cavalry and going into an Indian regiment, where there would be the hard work of soldiering. He says that he feels he is where he is on false pretences. If he displeases Mrs. Molyneux—in his marriage, for instance—she will do nothing for him."

"It is a creditable attitude of mind for him. Still, tell him to wait a little, Cousin Ju. I am your nearest male relative, and I have more money than I know what to do with. Why should I not look after my young cousin?"

Her sisters came in, bringing a breath of the autumn evening with them. They were still immature, boyish, without the consciousness of sex. He said to himself that he was lucky to have such cousins. For the first time he felt a glow of pleasure in the possession of kindred.



He took her to the nearest place where food was to be found.

chair. His portmanteau had been unstrapped and lay open, was apparently in process of unpacking.

He held the candle nearer to the pictures on the wall. They were old, dim oil-paintings. The sky and the olive-groves of Tuscany shone out of one. He went on to the next, a portrait.

Ah—he felt as if he had known the face always. It was suddenly as though he had left the normal, natural, living world behind, and stepped across the borders of the supernatural. He had been in many strange places of the world, had been in many perils and dangers, had known many excitements. Never had his heart beaten so violently before.

As he stared at the soft, pale, melancholy face of the portrait, he hardly wondered to hear a sigh at his ears. It was a little sigh, and for a moment there was the quiet breathing as of a young child somewhere close by him. The girl in the portrait wore a straight, short-waisted frock of white satin. She had pearls about her neck. There was a string of pearls in her hair. Her soft, childish arms were folded about a little lap-dog. There was something of the moony mystery of the pearls in the fair face, pale against a background of trees and darkness. The eyes were appealing.

As he replaced the picture the presence seemed to pass away from the room. The wind rose and sighed about the house. He was conscious of no supernatural fear, only of a great interest. Was it possible he had seen a ghost? And such a sweet one! Poor little lonely child, what was her history? She looked as though she needed comforting, tenderness. What an illusive, poetic little face it was!

He went back to the drawing-room, which once more was bright with fire and lamp-light. Mr. Hugh Young and Juliet were alone in the room. When he came in the lad stood up to go, with an apology for so long a visit. He noticed that his cousin did not seek to detain her visitor. Looking at her, he had an odd idea that her ears listened finely, as though for a step on the stairs. Was it possible that Aunt Lucy's daughters were a little afraid of her? It struck him with a faint sympathetic amusement that Mr. Hugh Young was perhaps a person in disfavour with Lady D'Arcy.

After the youth had taken his departure Juliet came a little closer to him, and looked down at him with the fair and frank expression which had struck him at first as

Lady D'Arcy followed on her daughters' footsteps. The tea came in. Her Ladyship announced, with a little yawn behind her hand, that she had had a busy afternoon.

"Mr. Young called," said Juliet.

"Ah, I thought I heard a ring at the front door."

There was chagrin in the mother's voice. Aylmer said to himself that he was proud of Juliet. She might so easily have said nothing about the call.

He had come at last to utter the question which had been on his lips for the last half-hour.

"There is a little portrait of a girl in my dressing-room, Aunt Lucy," he said. "It interests me. Do you know who it is?"

"Not at all, Humphrey. When I bought the Lodge I bought also a certain amount of its furniture. Those pictures were there when we came."

"Who were the previous owners of the Lodge?"

"A family named Warner. They had been at the Lodge from time immemorial. I gathered from something the house-agents said that the last representatives of the family were an old man and a child, grandfather and granddaughter. Even the sale of the Lodge meant little to them; there were so many claims to be satisfied. They were very poor, I believe."

He took occasion later on to ask Lady D'Arcy if there was any ghost-story in connection with the Lodge, telling her something of his experience.

"We have never seen anything," Lady D'Arcy replied. "Some of the servants said they saw or heard something. I put it down to the fancy of a hysterical housemaid. They are so easily alarmed. Such stories spread like wildfire. Already I find it difficult to keep servants here. The Lodge is so lonely, they say."

She looked at him with an anxiety which made him laugh.

"I shall certainly not talk to the servants, Aunt Lucy," he said.

"Nor to the children?"

"I shall not be so ill-mannered as to pretend to a knowledge of this skeleton in the Lodge cupboard."

"Besides, you know, Humphrey, I believe it was an illusion of the firelight and the

shadows. By the way, I heard your music in a dim way. It was enough to call up a ghost to hear it. What weird thing were you playing?"

He was relieved to find that she did not ask him where Juliet was at the time. She was so surprised at Humphrey's story that it put her daughter out of her head.

"I should never have given you that room, my dear Humphrey," she said, apologetically, "if I had believed in such stories. Would you like to change and go upstairs? You can have Arthur's room if you like."

Arthur was the only son of the house, a naval lieutenant, and away with his ship.

"Not for worlds, my dear aunt," Humphrey said, with an emphasis that surprised the lady, "I assure you I am not at all afraid of ghosts."

He was conscious, indeed, of a desire to see the ghost again, the strength of which rather surprised himself.

He had not long to wait. She came to him between sleep and waking. She was in his dreams. From the dark background of his sleep her little face glimmered pale as ivory. He came to know that face as it was revealed to him, far more distinctly than her portrait had revealed it. The face was hardly beautiful, only young and soft and pale, with limpid eyes, and a haze of dreams upon it for its expression. She hovered over him, reminding him of a picture he had seen somewhere of the Angel Guardian; her hands seemed extended over him in a tender protection.

She came night after night. If she left a sleep unvisited he was conscious of a strange loneliness. As he played in the dark of afternoons and evenings she would come and sit by the piano. Music always seemed to bring her. He used to play to her, putting a new spirit and heart into the music. He used to wonder at the others that they did not seem to see her sitting there, partly retired into the shadows, her face and her dress gleaming like moonlight. But apparently the vision of her was only for him.

He stayed on week after week at the Lodge. Lady D'Arcy was well-pleased about it, that he, who had always led a life of strenuous activities, should be content to settle down through October and November at the Lodge, where there was not even shooting to be done. She knew that he had many invitations elsewhere. They rained upon him once people knew that he had returned home. But he accepted none of them; it was pleasant, he said, to the delighted woman, to be with his kin—the only kin he had. Why should he go further for pleasure?

There was some subtle change about Humphrey. He was absent-minded, and at times a little odd in his manner. Lady D'Arcy had caught his eyes with an expression of seeing something where for her there was an empty room. And that passion of his for music! Every afternoon he was at the piano. He was plainly not pleased if he had to be anywhere else. And the sounds he awoke from the piano, which was an old thing, were something new in the experience of Lady D'Arcy and her children. It was uncanny, as Juliet said. Juliet was on those terms with Humphrey that she could say what she would. The music he drew from the old piano was uncannily beautiful.

He was quite well aware of the madness of his own obsession, though for the time he delivered himself to it. There were intervals when even the music did not bring her, and those were times of an arid loneliness and desolation to him. To be sure, when he could tear himself away from the Lodge, he used to combat his own folly. And he was uneasily conscious all the time that his aunt misinterpreted his willingness to stay.

He had meant to have done something for the young lovers before this. He had gone so far as to become friends with Mrs. Molyneux, who liked an adventurous man, and smiled kindly on Humphrey Aylmer from the first. He meant to pursue the friendship, to bring it to the point when he might broach the matter of her nephew and his young cousin. Juliet looked to him as a sort of Providence. It touched him to find her frank, trustful regard upon him.

At last it came to him that he must do something. He could not go on letting the little ghost fill the central niche in his life with her cold, incorporeal presence.

He presented himself in the consulting room of a famous nerve specialist. They had met before, and had conceived a cordial liking for each other.

"Don't tell me that you are among the patients," Sir Richard said, glancing casually at the face, over which a subtle difference had come since their last meeting. "I should have said that you were the soundest man I knew."

"What do you think," Aylmer said; quietly, "of a man who is in love with a ghost?"

"That a pretty girl would be a thousand times better."

Aylmer unpacked his story, and the doctor listened with interest.

"I don't doubt your word any more than I should doubt my own," he said, when Aylmer had finished. "You don't strike me as a person given to hallucinations. A good many men would tell you that your liver was out of order, your eyes wrong, your nerves gone to pieces. I see no trace of any of these things; but—if you are really sure that it is a ghost and not some minx playing tricks on you—I would advise you first to go away. Get rid of the associations of the house. Afterwards, find a young lady of flesh and blood to drive out this intangible mistress of yours. Don't go back. Be done with it now this minute. I assure you that, if you allow the thing to go on, it will ultimately affect your mind. It is unwholesome, unnatural."

"Thank you," Aylmer said, with a wintry smile. "You have said precisely what I have been saying to myself. I believe it is very sound advice."

When he had left Harley-street he got down into Oxford-street and walked away westward. It was the dreariest hour of the day, the hour when vitality slackens and things seem not worth while. He walked as briskly as he could for the press of people. He wanted to be free of them, to be somewhere he could think his thoughts. The afternoon winter sun lit the sky with a cold splendour. It was full in his face as he went, dazzling in the absence of shade. All that great highway out of London was a golden path to the heart of the sun, which presently would drop below the horizon, giving way to a frosty night.

The light flooding his eyes and his brain became in time intolerable. Half-way down the Bayswater-road he stopped in front of a red building of a curious shape. He had heard of the place before, but had never visited it. Why, here was the rest he sought, the quiet thinking-place far from the eyes of men.

He went into the building. Coming in from the aching light outside, he thought at

first that he was alone. He sat down in a seat, and, leaning back, closed his eyes. It wanted an hour to sunset, at which time the building would be closed. All about him were pictures of the life of Our Lord on earth, comfortable, consoling pictures. He thought that the consolation was in the very air of the place. Blessed was she, he said to himself, whose thought it had been to set such a wayside inn for weary travellers.

Suddenly a little sigh broke on his ear, just such a tender, weary sigh as he had heard when that ghostly presence was near him. He started up, wide-eyed. Was it possible that she was going to follow him here, wherever he went?

No. He saw now that the person who had sighed was a young girl, who had fallen asleep in a seat a little way behind him. Her shabby hat had fallen off. Her face, drooping forward, supported by her hand, was hidden by the pale hair which hung about her in a long, straight mass. She was sighing in her sleep. The attitude of her slender body was one of utter weariness.

He went towards her, knowing all the time what he should see. Why, the face was the face of the little ghost, but, thank God, a living, a breathing face. The ghost had prepared her the way. A sudden rush of great joy came over him. He had to control himself, or he would have taken the sleeping head to his breast.

She opened her eyes and gazed at him without much surprise. There was something almost of recognition in her gaze.

"My child," he said. He could hardly keep the pulsating passion out of his voice. "You had fallen asleep. You do not look well. Let me take you home."

There were great shadows under her eyes, painful hollows in her cheeks and about her temples.

She tried to stand upright, but she reeled a little, and he understood.

"My God!" he cried; and the old caretaker of the place who had peeped in curiously was amazed at the anguish in his voice. "You are starving, starved. Come, I must get you some food at once."

She went with him like a child. He took her to the nearest place where food was to be found, and got her some soup. He watched her, while she ate it, with the eyes of a mother who sees her sick child feed, quite unconscious of the amazed faces about him, or the discrepancy between his own appearance and the shabby girl's.

She had only taken a few spoonfuls when she stopped and looked at him as though she had suddenly remembered.

"My grandfather is ill in bed," she said, in a whisper. "He has had no food since yesterday. I had no money to buy him medicine. I was on my way to ask money from someone we used to know, when I felt ill and went into the chapel to rest."

"Finish your soup," he said, "and we will go to him. We will bring him all he wants. Neither you nor he will ever want for anything again."

He had no thought that he might seem rather mad to the girl, nor did she seem surprised. She looked at him with a passionate gratitude whilst she forced herself to eat some more of the soup. Her faithful brown eyes were the eyes of the ghost. He felt beside himself with joy because his ghost had become flesh and blood, because in the Chapel of Rest he had found his very heart's desire.

He was hardly surprised when she told him, as they drove to that wretched street in the purlieu of Oxford-street, where her grandfather lay dying of want in a garret under the roof, that her name was Lucia Warner.

"Everything went from us," she said, "in a long Chancery suit. My grandfather has been teaching the violin. He was wretchedly paid. Little by little even his tuitions fell off. And he is very old. I taught the piano; but when I became so shabby no one would admit me into their houses. Why do you care so much? Is it because God sent you and put it into your heart to pity us?"

"It is because God put it into my heart," he said.

Money can do much. The sick old man thought he was in Heaven when he woke up, after a journey in an ambulance, in a fresh, sweet room, amid a silence of green fields, broken only by the singing of birds. After all, since his illness was only heart-break, with the addition of privation, he soon grew well, being happy and well-cared for, with the assurance of a peaceful old age before him. Being the dreamy visionary he was, it was hardly wonderful to him that Humphrey Aylmer should have fallen so suddenly and wildly in love with Lucia. It was easier to accept benefits from Lucia's husband, and the wooing was not long a-doing.

No one ever knew the circumstances in which Humphrey Aylmer had discovered Sir Michael Warner and his granddaughter. Everyone, save Lady D'Arcy, were agreed as to the exquisiteness of the bride, and the romantic and high-bred air of Sir Michael. And presently Lady D'Arcy was as much pleased with Hugh Young for a son-in-law as she could have been with Humphrey himself. To be sure, Mrs. Molyneux had behaved most handsomely to the young couple; and Juliet, thanks to her Cousin Humphrey, had not gone dowdier to her groom.

After a time, it was the most natural thing in the world that Lady D'Arcy, having two daughters to take about, should have grown tired of the Lodge and been ready to hand it over to those who, as she said, had the best right to it. Her little house in Kensington Gore pleased her a deal better.

The portrait of the ghost now hangs in the drawing-room at the Lodge, and is frequently taken for that of Mrs. Aylmer. The ghost never came again, although she might have been attracted by the wailing of old Sir Michael's violin in those ghost rooms which he had chosen for himself.

Ghosts are the last things one would ascribe to the Lodge nowadays. So cheerful a habitation, full of laughter and peace, of love, and the sound of children's voices could never harbour anything so sad as a ghost. Lady D'Arcy and her daughters, coming and going, notice that the unearthly chill has departed from the rooms that used to be called the ghost's.

"Depend on it," Lady D'Arcy says, "the house had stood so long empty that the damp had eaten its way in there. And now you have banished it, with fires and lights."

"Hearth-fires and home-lights," says Humphrey Aylmer, enigmatically. He has a theory that the little ghost grieved for those of her name who were in such sore straits, and now, in their well-being, is laid to rest.



SUNDAY.

Drawn by E. Blair Leighton.



(By permission of Berlin Photographic Co., 133 New Bond St., W.)





THE CHALLENGE.

From the painting by R. Caton Woodville.

Drawn by WALTER WILSON, R.I.



Come bring with a noise,
 An merry, merry boys.
 The Christmas log to the firing.
 While my Good Dame, she
 Bids you all be free,
 And drink to your hearts' desiring.

Caut apri defero,
 Reddens laudes Domino.
 The boar's head in hand bring I,
 With earland gar and rosemary;
 I pray you all sing merri y—
 Cui estis in convivio.

With his blue and lapping tongue
 Many of you will be stung—
 Snip! Snap! Dragon!
 For he snags at all that comes
 Snatching at his feast of r'ims—
 Snip! Snap! Dragon!



Illustrated by A. M. FAULKNER.

UNAVOIDABLY POSTPONED.

BY

B. M. CROKER.

A GREAT white Orient liner lay in the harbour of Colombo, with her blue Peter flying. The coaling process was accomplished, and her passengers—who had lunched and scattered over the town and its environs—were being thus summoned to abandon Ceylon's spicy breezes for the breezes of the sea.

As the *Oriana* was homeward bound from Melbourne, naturally most of her freight were Australians—squatters and their families taking a trip to the old country, wealthy men from the big towns, tourists who had been visiting the Colonies, parsons, actors, doctors, engineers, with their corresponding women folk.

And now a small Indian contingent had been contributed—these, the so-to-speak residents of three weeks—eyed with the same description of curiosity, superiority, and faint hostility which schoolboys experience with regard to new pupils.

Among the group of pale mem-sahibs, sunburnt planters, children, ayahs, and green parrots was one figure and face, well-known, not merely to the captain and officers, but to several of the passengers, who hastened to offer the arrival a hearty greeting.

This individual was a certain popular sportsman who roamed the world in search of big game and "heads." The Hon. Lumley Grantham was the only son of Viscount Nesfield, and in a way the despair of his parents, who were anxious that he should remain at home and settle, instead of which he roamed about the globe incessantly, a modern wandering Jew (as sudden in his arrivals and departures), energetic, enterprising, and erratic. He had been in the Army, but the service did not accord sufficient leave to enable an ardent sportsman to shoot in the Rockies, and to fish in New Zealand; and so, after a few years' restraint, he threw off his red coat and unbuckled his sword. He had a passion for trophies, and owned the most unique and comprehensive collection of almost every known horned animal, from a moose to a Jungle sheep. To add to his collection he spared neither time nor expense. If he heard some notable animal discussed one evening at his club, such as a rare red bull in the Shan Hills, a strange antelope in Borneo, the chances were that he would immediately look up trains and steamers on the spot, and depart on his quest within the week. His marches and stalkings beyond the bounds of civilisation were fruitful in dangers and hardships, and his mother, who was devoted to him, lived in an agony of apprehension that some day, instead of securing his object and prize, the prize should turn the tables and make a prey of her only son. For weeks and even months she did not hear from him—he was probably in Thibet, Somaliland, or Central America, and the unhappy lady would lie awake for hours, thinking of "Must" elephants, tigers, cholera, earthquakes, and snakes. Oh, if Lumley would only fall in love with some nice girl, marry her, and stay at home, how happy and thankful she would be; and she secretly vowed a window in their country church, should this blessed event ever take place. Lady Nesfield knew so many charming girls; these she cautiously praised, and brought to the notice of Lumley; but, unfortunately, it is so seldom that a young man and his mother admire the same sort of girl, also Lumley's shooting proclivities had made him wary—he, like Tennyson's character, "saw the snare, and he retired," preferring his roving life and freedom.

He was now thirty-two years of age, but looked older; tall, and without a superfluous ounce of flesh on his bones, as wiry and sinewy as a greyhound; his skin was brown, his short hair black, and two dark, keen eyes illuminated a pleasant but not handsome face. They were honest, watchful eyes, something like those of an intelligent dog, and when they smiled, they became beautiful.

Captain Grantham's manners were easy and unaffected; he could find something to say to everyone, from a royal duke to an Indian beater, and was equally popular with all grades of society: a well-known character on most liners, whether to the Cape, America, Bombay, or Melbourne; he was, during his constant trips, continually coming across former fellow-travellers.

On the present occasion, when he and his baggage came up the side, Captain Grantham received quite an ovation from half a dozen. With one or other of these he subsequently paced the deck, and smoked and talked till the *Oriana* was well out to sea, relating thrilling shikar stories and his recent exploits with the gusto and enthusiasm of a schoolboy. He described the hunting down and capture of a big Rogue elephant in the Annamulley Jungles, and the notable pair of ibex horns he had brought from the Pulnay Hills.

After dinner, as he sat on deck in the starlight, talking to a matronly acquaintance, he said, "It seems a full ship—quite a number of girls, too—all homeward bound."

"Yes," she answered, "and some of them pretty. The two with the scarlet Tam-o'-shanters are the Miss Todds, heiresses from Woorolango. And the one in the white yachting cap is said to be the belle of Sydney!"

"And who is the dark girl who sits at the end of the first officer's table?"

"Beside a delicate lady with white hair and a bloodless face? I do not know, except that they are Mrs. and Miss Loftus, presumably mother and daughter. The girl is devoted to the invalid, and never leaves her side—they keep entirely to themselves."

"Must be rather slow for the young lady?"

"No doubt it is; but when she is spoken to, she merely smiles and answers yes or no—conversation cannot flourish under such circumstances, can it?"

"Do they know no one?"

"No! No one knows them, or who they are, which amounts to the same thing."

"She is a handsome girl, with a thundering good figure, and looks well-bred."

"Appearances are sometimes deceitful!"

"I don't know about that—one has an intuition—"

"I believe you are going to break the spell of silence, and make the lady's acquaintance."

"Yes—why not?"

"Why not, indeed? But you will find it easier said than done! She has never opened a conversation with anyone during three weeks. I've even tried to talk to her myself!"

"I see you are a little piqued."

"I am not the only one who is piqued. I think the damsel is inclined to give herself airs—we are possibly not good enough—but I expect she will thaw to you."

"Come, now, I call that rather a nasty one, Mrs. Seymour! What have I done to deserve it?"

"Nothing—forgive me, and help me on with my cape, and we will take a little turn before I turn in. As for the Loftus party, they may have very good reasons for keeping all at arm's length"—she paused and stared at him significantly—"for not wishing to know us, or us to know them," and, as she spoke, the lady rose from her chair as if the subject were closed and done with.

Like a true sportsman, Captain Grantham was patient and pertinacious—he bided his time—but biding one's time on the trackless ocean, aboard of a fast liner, is not the same thing as tracking a quarry in the pathless forest. There is a limit to waiting—a limit represented by the port of arrival.

For several days he made no progress whatever beyond discovering that the lady was admired by the men folk, and suspected by the ladies, who, whilst admitting the patent fact of her filial devotion, had nothing to say in her favour. There was plenty to occupy the time among the passengers, and one sulky girl was soon overlooked—but not by Captain Grantham. She interested him; he was determined to make her acquaintance, and luck favoured him—a sudden lurch of the ship in the abominable current just off Socotra capsized the old lady's chair, and she would have been hurled across the deck had he not dashed to her assistance, caught her bodily in his arms, and saved in all respects the situation. He took the entire charge of Mrs. Loftus, personally conducted her to her cabin, and subsequently collected books, spectacles, shawl, and was thus brought into communication with the young lady, and from that moment his object was secured. She proved not at all *difficile* once the ice was broken, but a charming and captivating acquaintance. After nearly four weeks' silence she seemed anxious to make up for lost time, and talked incessantly—she was also an admirable listener. Before they had reached Suez she had largely extended her acquaintance, and became as intimate with some of the passengers as previously she had been remote. But her first acquaintance was her chief ally—together they paced the deck for exercise, together they did problems in the papers, they played chess, and exchanged books and opinions, and sat for a long time after dinner watching the stars, and the low tropical moon.

In the canal Captain Grantham, who was on the "amusement committee," helped to get up a grand concert, and prevailed on Miss Loftus to sing. He had gleaned from her mother that she had a fine voice, and also a few other talents, as he sat beside the invalid's long chair; he discovered that she was lady-like and refined; her surroundings spoke of taste and money. Rata, as the girl was called, was her only child. Mrs. Loftus was a widow returning to England, which she had quitted twenty-eight years previously. Her husband's people came from Gloucester, and were nearly all dead.

She had lived near Christchurch, New Zealand, and only been twice to England, since she and her husband had become colonists. Her brother had commanded a well-known regiment, and was now a Brigadier in India.

Yes, Captain Grantham remembered to have seen him some years previously, and here was a link between them—such a very small matter will constitute a tie on board ship, especially when both the ends are anxious to be joined.

At the rehearsals for the concert Miss Loftus discovered to her listeners a magnificent contralto voice. People vowed she was a second Melba—there was also something that thrilled and touched one's very heartstrings in the expression of her rich full notes.

The concert took place whilst the ship was in the Canal, and the *Oriana* seemed motionless, as it wound its way through the limitless sand; the concert was, of course, packed; every seat was occupied. There were the usual banjo and guitar ditties; men's songs; a glee; then Miss Loftus stood up, all in white, and, without a note of music, sang "An Arab Love Song."

The theme, which seemed peculiarly suitable to the encompassing desert, had a weird and impressive effect, and threw a momentary spell over the entire audience. There was a wild, passionate note in the singer's voice, that appealed to something far down, hidden away and stifled, that is born in every human being.

All the world of the *Oriana* realised that they were listening to something entirely out of the common, to something unusual, unforgettable, and unique.

Miss Loftus presented a delightful picture; she was good to look at, as she stood up in the moonlight on the little platform—graceful, imperial, and yet so simple—last, by no means least, so undeniably handsome.

Her second song was a simple ballad, which caused a lump to arise in the throats of her audience; but when the last notes had died away among the sands, what applause—real applause! Such was the uproar and the acclamation that a ship which was following became extremely envious, and half inclined to despatch a boat to inquire the reason of the unusual demonstration?

A Mediterranean moon looks sympathetically on lovers. What can be more romantic than those long, idle evenings on that romantic sea? By the time *M' ta* was sighted, Lumley Grantham, the despair of mothers (his own included), had proposed and been accepted by Rata Loftus. Although they had only known one another three weeks, time at sea means ten times more than time on land. They had no distractions or occupation, they spent at least twelve hours in each other's society, they had learnt one another's tastes and characters (so far as these may be known before marriage). She listened eagerly to his sporting adventures—he, to her descriptions of New Zealand, her vivid little sketches of Colonial life, her craving to see England and other countries, to hear operas, concerts, and, above all, to visit Bayreuth during the festival.

When the news of the engagement leaked out it was received on board with mixed feelings, but on the whole the ship was pleased! It was a wonderful catch for the girl; but she was handsome, accomplished, and rich—some of the women murmured among themselves, "That for all anyone knew she might be an adventuress, and the uncle, who was a General, a fraud;" but they kept their suspicions to themselves. Mrs. Loftus now became more active, the voyage had revived her. She walked on deck, a little erect figure with a stately poise of her white head, and even discussed her plans with other ladies.

She proposed to make London her headquarters for the present, to take a furnished house, and get Rata presented—it was only March; there were sure to be May drawing-rooms.

The happy couple—they were very much in love—went ashore and spent a day at Gibraltar in the highest spirits, chaperoned by Mrs. Loftus. It was surmised that they had despatched telegrams and letters, and, at any rate, Miss Loftus wore a handsome ring on her engaged finger when she returned to the ship, loaded with gifts of fans, quaint bits of Moorish ornaments, and a fine mantilla, which she wore at a fancy ball two evenings later as a Spanish lady, and looked a Spanish donna to the life. On their arrival in London Mrs. and Miss Loftus drove straight to the Carlton Hotel, and Lumley Grantham joined his family in Grosvenor-place.

The next day Lord and Lady Nesfield came to call on the new arrivals, and their son's future bride.

They were not a formidable couple; he, a tall, bent, grey old man, with courteous manners; she, a pretty, impulsive little woman, enchanted that Lumley had chosen a wife at last, thankful for anyone, as long as she was not black, and prepared to be delighted with her daughter-in-law.

Rata for her part was much touched by their kind welcome, and a' now went merrily as a marriage bell. Miss Loftus was handsome, healthy, lady-like; she had £25,000—quite ample, as Lumley had no occasion to marry a great fortune. Her mother was a refined and amiable woman, passionately devoted to her only child, and the attachment was most fully returned. Rata was a girl of strong feelings, and it was patent to all that she was deeply in love with her *fiancé*. Mrs. Loftus, who was evidently a woman of wealth, was soon established in a fashionable house in Lowndes-square, with a smart carriage and an adequate staff of servants, and all Lumley Grantham's relatives and connections, male and female, crowded to call upon the lady of his choice.

They found her as handsome, graceful, and agreeable as they were led to expect, perhaps a little unconventional and colonial. With respect to her voice, there could be but one opinion. She was a serious loss to the musical world, and could have made a fortune as a great *prima donna*. Invitations were showered upon 225 Lowndes-square. Miss Loftus was in continual request, and soon became a social favourite. She was a magnificent horsewoman, and rode every morning in the Row, accompanied by Captain Grantham.

Among the chorus of praise were a few discordant notes; the loudest and shrillest of these issued from the Hon. Mrs. Custance, Lord Nesfield's only sister, a lady in somewhat narrow circumstances, with two tall, talkative daughters. Her views were not rigid respecting the marrying of first cousins, and Lumley's engagement had been a shock to her, for she had always hoped that he would one day settle down, and marry either Maudie or Mag, instead of which he presented as *fiancé* a Colonial nobody, whom he had, so to speak, picked up at sea! Who was she? This was a question continually on her lips.

The Loftus family were undoubtedly respectable, but how was anyone to know she was one of them? and the uncle, a General, was possibly a myth. These people had no friends in London, and did not seem to know a soul.

For all these objections Lady Nesfield found satisfactory replies. She was delighted at her son's capture—now he would be chained fast, and kept at home. General Broome had written his congratulations, and was sending a present. Two of the Loftus girls were to be bridesmaids—the wedding would take place in July, as the bride's mother was in precarious health, and anxious to see her daughter happily married, as she believed—so she told Lady Nesfield in confidence—that her own days were numbered, and she could not bear the idea of leaving Rata alone in the world.

At the present moment she had rallied sufficiently to be able to accompany her girl to the park, the play, and elsewhere.

The questions of Mrs. Custance were also on the lips, and in the mind of, Lady Foxrock, Lumley Grantham's only sister. She was undeniably one of the smart set. The childless wife of a wealthy old peer, ambition was her fetish, and, in spite of her passion for bridge, motoring, and racing, she still contrived to find time for the casting of social nets, and for bringing important intimacies into the family circle. She had always resolved that Lumley, "the wild hunter," as she playfully called him, should marry, when he did take the step, to the advantage of his family, and she had mentally selected one of her exclusive friends, the rather *passée* daughter of a noble duke, with a splendid connection and a considerable dowry. She never dreamt, for one moment, that Lumley would find anything more attractive abroad than his usual horns, tusks, and skins, but home he came, with a bride, so to speak, in his hand—a mere colonial nobody. Lady Foxrock took an invincible dislike to her on the spot, and the dislike was mutual. Rata felt herself an antagonist to this tall, sour-looking lady, with a thin, high nose, pale, arrogant eyes, and slow, disdainful airs. Lady Foxrock could not understand why men admired the colonial!—in her opinion she was frightfully second-rate. And who *was* she? "How?" she asked her mother, "did they know she was related to the Gloucestershire people? The uncle in India was probably a fiction! The girl had no friends in London, and, for all that they could tell, might be an adventuress. Lumley's interests must be watched—he was an *idiot*, where that girl was concerned."

Naturally Lady Foxrock had been indefatigable in her endeavours to discover something about the Loftuses, but, unfortunately, New Zealand was remote, and her acquaintances in the Colonies were limited, and she had a confused idea that people who lived in Melbourne or Sydney must, as a matter of course, be intimate with those in Christchurch and Wellington!

One sleepy afternoon, at Hurlingham, kind fate placed a clue in her hand. She was sitting in one of the little tents on the lawn, enjoying tea and strawberries; her near neighbours were a large, merry party of acquaintances, and gradually intermixed.

Among the group was a grey-haired, square-built gentleman, who was presented to her as Mr. Dexter, spending a few months in England after an absence of thirty years. Lady Foxrock surveyed him critically; his clothes were ill-fitting, his gloves preposterous, but his carriage, square chin, and keen eyes, gave indication of a man of character and importance.

He sank into a chair beside the lady, and said, "It is a pretty scene," nodding his head at the numerous gay groups, the passing crowd, the lawn scattered with flower-beds, the tall trees, through which shimmered the river.

"Yes, but I've seen it so often," she drawled, "its charm has faded a little."

"Ah, well, if you had been thirty years in the colonies you would not complain of that."

"Oh, really, I suppose not," she answered, indifferently, her attention diverted by the sight of her brother, his *fiancée*, Mrs. Loftus, and Lady Nesfield, who were then passing. She noticed that her companion started, and stared hard; he even leant forward and gazed after the group; then, as he met her glance of interrogation, he said, "I've just seen a familiar face—a face from home."

"Oh, then you are from New Zealand," she exclaimed, "and have recognised Mrs. and Miss Loftus."

"Ah," he answered, "so you know them?"

"Yes; and you?"

"Very intimately once; but eighteen years ago they left our neighbourhood, and I entirely lost sight of them."

"Who *was* Mr. Loftus?" she asked abruptly.

"A prosperous gentleman who owned several large ranches, and died a year ago, leaving a fortune."

"Was he of good birth?"

"I should say so—But we don't take much account of that in the Colonies, you know."

"And Mrs. Loftus?"

"She was renowned for her philanthropy and charities. She had no children—"

"What! No children. She has a daughter—you saw her just now."

"An adopted daughter," he corrected.

"Impossible!"

"I assure you it is the case; there was no secret about it."

"There is a secret about it, *now*."

"You seem interested in the family."

"I should think I was, considering that Miss Loftus is going to marry my brother—Lord Nesfield's only son."

"You don't say so," he exclaimed, in unfeigned amazement.

"But I do—the wedding is fixed to take place in ten days' time. Shall we go outside this tent, and stroll about a little—impossible to talk here."

"Certainly," and he moved a chair out of her way, and followed Lady Foxrock down towards the polo ground.

"I suppose there is no mistake, Mr. Dexter," she began, "and you really recognise these people?"

"I recognise Mrs. Loftus. I could swear to her anywhere, to her white face, and prominent blue eyes. The girl was only two when I last saw her, but I believe her to be the same. She was very handsome, and her name, I believe, was Rata, named after a flower."

"Yes; it is Rata."

"There never was any concealment or mystery respecting her. The Loftuses had no family. They were passionately fond of children, and they adopted a child, and, a short time after this, they moved away to the south island, and we lost sight of them."

"Do you know who the child was?"

"Well"—with obvious reluctance—"yes, I do."

"You will tell me, won't you?" and she flashed on him a challenging glance from her small grey eyes.

A moment's silence. At last he said, "No; I would rather not. It is not my business, and you must excuse me."

"Oh, Mr. Dexter, won't you speak out? It means so much to us."

"There is absolutely nothing against the girl's character. I think I can assure you of that."

"Then it is her *birth*—that is the question."

"Well, she is not responsible for that, is she?"

"No—o," the negative was reluctant.

"She seems a fine, tall, beautiful young woman, and I'm sure she has been well brought up, and she will be wealthy—what more do you want?"

"The truth, and nothing but the truth."

"It is not always advisable to know the truth—sometimes silence is best."

"And so you won't speak," she said, impatiently, "you are inflexible?"

He bowed his head.

"Look here; we are just going to come face to face with the party. Will you accost them?"

"No—I prefer not—unless Mrs. Loftus recognises me."

They approached in a line, the two younger people, handsome and radiant—Rata all in white, carrying a becoming pink sunshade—the elder ladies deep in mutual confidences. Little did they suspect that the smiling lady in grey, who had accosted them in passing, was elaborating a scheme which was to upset their happy anticipations.

"Well, Mr. Dexter," said Lady Foxrock, "I see you are a man of honour, and respect the affairs of other people, and I must say that, *much* as I should like to know something about my future sister-in-law, I admire your reticence immensely. We will consider our talk strictly confidential. Are you married?"

"Yes; that was my wife with the Greysons—the little woman in the blue toque."

"You won't mention the subject to her, will you?"

"No, certainly not. The less said the better."

"Where are you staying?"

"At the Hyde Park Hotel—for a couple of weeks. We have not many friends in London."

"Then I should like to do myself the pleasure of calling on Mrs. Dexter."

"That is really very kind of you. I am sure she will be delighted to make your acquaintance."

"And now," said the lady, "we must go and look for our parties. They will think we are lost."

Lady Foxrock lost no time in calling on Mrs. Dexter. She found her twenty years younger than her husband, and of a much inferior class—a yellow-haired, shallow, over-dressed little person, who was obviously flattered by a visit from her ladyship.

Her ladyship dangled some imposing invitations before her dazzled eyes, and then began to ask cautious questions about New Zealand.

"Yes, she was New Zealand born herself, not long married—she had insisted on Joe taking her to England, for a spree like! She wanted to see the world a bit, and society. He had brought her, though all his own folk were dead, and he had no home now."

Had Mrs. Dexter ever heard of a Mrs. Loftus in her part of the world?

Yes, ages ago—she'd almost forgotten the tale.

"Oh, so there was a tale—how very interesting—had it anything to do with her adopted daughter?"

Mrs. Dexter nodded and giggled.

"The girl is in England now, you know, with Mrs. Loftus, and about to make a grand match."



Although they had only known one another three weeks, time at sea means ten times more than time on land.

Lady Foxrock had touched the right chord; the little colonial was filled with a sudden spasm of envy.

"A splendid match—*she!*"

"Yes, to the son of a lord."

"Oh—what!" and she burst out into an excited laugh. "Well, I declare, this is too fine a joke. If they only knew, wouldn't they be wild?"

"Knew what?"

"Oh, I'd better not say—it might get out. I don't want to be a spoil-sport; and Joe hates what he calls 'gossip,'" and she put her finger on her lips.

Lady Foxrock drew herself up and looked dignified. "I assure you that I never gossip, Mrs. Dexter. If you can tell me who this girl was, and is, you will be doing me a great favour, and one I shall not forget; but, of course, if you feel that you have no wish to confide in me—and after all I am a stranger—" she paused, and her smile implied a threat.

After all, she was Lady Foxrock, and if she was denied this small request, good-bye to a box at the Opera, an invitation for Lady Foxrock's fancy ball, and other delights.

"Well, then, look here; I *will* tell you," and she suddenly leant forward. Her visitor also approached her head, her heart beat fast—these moments are the sparks of life!

"Miss Loftus, the adopted daughter of Mrs. Loftus, is just a——"

There was a footstep outside.

"Hark! my husband is coming!"

"Quick, quick, you must tell me!" cried Lady Foxrock, seizing her arm in an agony of suspense.

Mrs. Dexter leant forward and whispered, and, ere her whispering had ceased, the handle rattled, and the two heads started apart, as the door opened and Mr. Dexter entered the room.

His wife had entirely recovered her self-possession, and said, with incredible assurance, "Oh, here you are, dear. I'm so glad you've come in while Lady Foxrock is here."

He advanced with broad, extended palm. Lady Foxrock, who seemed embarrassed and strangely flushed, said, "Yes; I've paid, you see, my threatened visit to your wife, and now"—rising as she spoke—"I must positively be going. I'm such a busy person, my quarters of an hour are all filled up."

"I am sorry I did not come home a little sooner," said Joe Dexter, who saw that his wife was flattered and gratified, and felt proportionally pleased.

"I will send the cards to-morrow," continued Lady Foxrock, "and I shall hope to see you both on the 29th," and with a gracious handshake her ladyship swept out.

Once seated in her carriage, she felt herself trembling with excitement; a few civil words, a card of invitation, what had they not brought her? The match between Lumley and the New Zealander was practically broken off—in a few hours the notification would appear in the *Morning Post*!

She was determined to strike at once—no time like the present, and no time to be lost. She ordered her footman to drive to Lowndes-square.

Mrs. Loftus was at home, resting on the sofa in the back drawing-room. She had had an unusually fatiguing day, and looked ghastly as she struggled to her feet to receive Lady Foxrock. Her ladyship, being Lumley's sister, had the *entrée* at all hours to the (temporary) home of his *fiancée*. Yet Lady Foxrock was antipathetic to both Rata and her mother. She was cold, arrogant, interfering, and inquisitive—it seemed almost impossible that she could have been born a Nesfield!

"It is a little late," she said, glancing at a clock, "but I could not have slept to-night if I had not come to see you. I want to ask you something important about—Rata."

The lady's manner was menacing, and at the conclusion of her sentence the eyes of her hostess resembled those of some long hunted animal, that the cruel hunter has tracked to its lair at last!

"What about Rata?" she faltered, as she sank into a seat, and her hands were shaking visibly.

"Yes, what about Rata?" echoed a full gay voice. "Talk of an angel, and here I am!" she added playfully, as she advanced, a delightful vision in muslin gown, a flowery hat, and feather boa.

"Darling," cried Mrs. Loftus, "run away for a little. Lady Foxrock wishes to speak about you."

"But, dearest, if Leonora is going to talk about *me*, don't you think you are rather cruel to banish me. Curiosity is one of my strongest characteristics!"

"Enough of this nonsense," thought the visitor, and, turning roughly on Mrs. Loftus, she said, "I wish Rata to remain here—it is essential"; and then, turning quickly to Rata, she added, "If you are so naturally inquisitive, has it never occurred to you to wonder who you are?"

"Oh, my God!" murmured Mrs. Loftus, under her breath, "it has come! Rata, as you love me, leave me here alone with Lady Foxrock," and she half rose, and stretched out an appealing arm.

"No, dearest; if there is going to be trouble, I will stand by you. As to wondering who I am, Leonora," now facing the lady, "why should I, when I know that I am Rata Loftus?"

"By all accounts you have cherished a delusion. You are no more to Mrs. Loftus than to me—you are an adopted child. Mrs. Loftus adopted you when you were two years old."

"Well, even so, she *is* my mother," coming over, and taking her hand. "I could not love her more if she were ten times my mother." And she raised her eyes defiantly to Lady Foxrock.

"Yes—yes," faltered the miserable Mrs. Loftus. "Yes, darling, you are not my *real* child. I hoped you would never, never know—and now!" looking at Lady Foxrock, "is not *that* enough? Rata has always been to Edgar and me, as our very, very own."

"Enough!" echoed the visitor, "no, not nearly enough—not half enough. The girl should be made acquainted with her own race. Do you think I will stand by in silence, and allow by only brother, the future head of the family, to marry a *Maori*?"

"A *Maori*! What nonsense," cried Rata, indignantly.

"Nevertheless, your own grandfather is still living," she continued inexorably. "He is a chief called Ramparaha, and resides in a Pa——"

"There! you have killed her!" screamed the girl, rushing forward and catching Mrs. Loftus in her arms. Mrs. Loftus, whose blanched face had, during the above conversation, assumed a death-like hue, and who now collapsed without a word into a heap upon the sofa.

It was a dead faint indeed. Having laid her down and unfastened the neck of her dress, Rata dashed to the bell.

Then as she returned to the invalid she said, "I think you had better go—you have done your worst."

"I have done my *best* for my brother," answered Lady Foxrock, fiercely. "I am sorry your patroness has fainted—she would have kept the secret always, to her very last hour; what I have stated is true—and can be proved."

"Mother—mother," murmured the girl, as she rubbed the cold hands. Then to a servant, "Run for the nearest doctor, and send some brandy. Mrs. Loftus is very ill, and let someone show this lady out."

Lady Foxrock's words were prophetic, for Mrs. Loftus had kept her secret to her dying hour. When the doctor and the brandy arrived, she was past all human aid.

It appeared that she had a most dangerous form of heart disease, and it was a marvel she had lived so long.

Rata was stunned—she had sustained two violent shocks within the same hour. The announcement of her parentage, and the loss of her beloved mother.

Her grief was at first as wild and uncontrollable as that of one of her savage ancestors; then she became as a creature of stone, and shut herself up from all eyes, like some wounded animal who would suffer alone. Lady Nesfield and Lumley were all sympathy and affection—they did not yet know the truth. Lord Nesfield undertook the funeral arrangements, and Lady Nesfield, who could not prevail on Rata to leave the house, offered to take up her quarters in Lowndes-square; but this Rata declined. She and her sorrow, her anguish, and her fears were sufficient company for one another. The day after the funeral a paragraph to this effect appeared among the fashionable intelligence:—

"Owing to the sudden death of Mrs. Loftus, the marriage of Miss Loftus and Captain the Hon. Lumley Grantham, fixed for the 13th inst., is unavoidably postponed."

When affairs were returning to their normal course Lady Foxrock made her parents and her brother acquainted with the result of her investigations into the past of their future relation. At first their amazement transcended expression. The intelligence fell like a moral avalanche; they were all three aghast at the information.

"A *Maori*!" they repeated, "a *Maori*—a *Maori*!"

"But she is so accomplished and graceful, and sings so splendidly," argued Lady Nesfield.

"I believe most *Maori* women are graceful, and can sing!"

"And so *fair*," objected his lordship.

"Her father was an Englishman."

"And she never knew this till the other day. Oh, poor child!"

"The discovery you made killed the old lady," added Lord Nesfield.

"It certainly hastened her end," she admitted; "but, according to the doctors, she *ought* to have died years ago; in fact, it was a miracle she lived so long!"

"It is an extraordinary affair," exclaimed her father, "a most terrible disclosure—it seems incredible, and that such a, I may say, unheard-of catastrophe, should occur in *our* family——"

His family, his pedigree, was Lord Nesfield's pride—a long descent stirred his enthusiasm; before all things in the world he respected blue blood. His ancestors had fought at Cressy and Poitiers—he claimed descent from Henry the Seventh; that his only son and heir should marry a *Maori* woman—the descendant of cannibals and savages! Never. He was sorry for Lumley and the girl, but his resolution was embodied in the word, *never*.

When Rata permitted Lady Nesfield to see her, she realised by instinct that she was acquainted with her story, although not a word was uttered. And Lumley—he knew also. He called to see her daily, and sent her flowers and notes, but she remained mute and invisible.

At last she reappeared, and granted him an audience in the drawing-room. But here was a Rata he had never seen before, dressed in trailing black, and looking worn, hollow-eyed, and aged.

He felt as if this girl was almost a stranger.

"No, no; don't kiss me, Lumley," she protested. "Sit down in that chair, and let me talk to you. In the first place, I wish to show you a letter. In my—in—Mrs. Loftus' despatch-box I found this addressed to me, and inscribed 'To be opened after my death'—it will tell you everything you ought to know."

He glanced at the letter in his hand. It began "Dearest Rata,—When your eyes read these words I shall be no more, and I am now about to tell you what I never imparted to you in life. You are not my own child, but my adopted daughter. Your parentage will startle you, my dear; you were born in a *Maori* Pa—, near Wellington. I saw you there, a lovely, fair baby of two years old, fell in love with you, and, after a little time, persuaded your grandfather, Ramparaha, chief of a great tribe, to give you to me, to bring up absolutely as my own. You were an orphan, and he had other grandchildren. Your father was an Englishman of good birth—needless to tell you his name. Your mother was the most beautiful girl of her race in the whole of the North Island,—they were married by a priest, and by the rites of her tribe. Not long afterwards he was drowned in the lake Tavatara—your mother died in giving you birth, and that is your history. We never regretted the step we took—you were always our joy and comfort. We moved away from the neighbourhood of Wellington, and brought you up as an English girl; you have not one *Maori* trait in your character. I feel that my life hangs by a thread, and I intend to take you to Europe, where I hope you may make friends and possibly marry. Once you have won the love of a good man, who will be your protector and guardian, I am ready to depart in peace. He will have to be told the truth some day, when you are his wife, and, if he loves you, it can make no difference.

"My will, enclosed with this letter, was drawn up in New Zealand, and is perfectly legal and formal. In it I speak of you as Rata, my adopted daughter, and leave you all I possess. Make good use of this wealth, dear child, and be happy."

When Lumley Grantham came to the end of this letter, he looked up, and met the eyes of his *fiancée*, and for some seconds they surveyed one another in silence. She was the first to speak.

"It makes a difference—a terrible difference, Lumley, does it not?"

"But you are not changed."

"I am—I am a *Maori*. Imagine it! A *Maori*! I seem to feel different—to summon up strange, dim dreams. A tall old man with feathers on his head—yes—of a low, dark hut with smoke——"

"No—no," protested Lumley, "that is your imagination. Your nerves are unstrung."

"And I would always be thinking of *that*."

The man felt curiously embarrassed—the girl was so matter of fact, so unlike herself; there was something unfamiliar, and almost stern, about her.

"Your father is, of course, overwhelmed by the news," she resumed. "I remember he asked to see the Loftus' pedigree—think of my pedigree! Tell me, what does he say? Oh, speak to me *plainly*—he will not have me as a daughter-in-law?"

"He likes you personally, Rata, so does my mother; you know that, but—but——"

"Yes, it is a tremendous but—an impassable but—I understand."

"Of course, it will never be known beyond ourselves."

"It will," she interrupted. "My mother hugged herself with the same delusion, yet the secret crept out, and killed her!"

"It shall not kill us," he answered, slowly. "We will, on the contrary, smother, and bury it."

"Ah, easier said than done! Now tell me frankly, Lumley, what are your family proposing to do with me?"

"To find you a nice lady companion, and let you travel for a bit."

"Yes—and then?"

"Well, I—," he stammered, "I'm not sure that they suggested anything further. To be plain, my father will not hear of our marriage. My mother is heartbroken; but she, too, is against it. Leonora—is—is——"

"Triumphant! That is understood. And you, Lumley?"

"I am ready to marry you to-morrow. I love you, Rata. Of course you come first of all, but I do not wish to quarrel with my father, or break my mother's heart. It seems so hard to hit on the right thing, and decide. I want a good think—all by myself. I will go off alone to-morrow morning into the country, and come back and tell you what the result is, and then we can make our plans."

"Very well."
"What time shall I come—may I say four o'clock?"
"Yes."

"Then four o'clock to-morrow without fail."

Rata awaited the appointed hour, which meant so much to her, with feverish impatience; long before the time she was pacing the drawing-room and watching the timepiece. Did Lumley mean to abandon her? Was the suggestion of travelling on the Continent but the preliminary to a final farewell? Had he not been confused, embarrassed, unlike himself, and cold, when they had met the previous day, although his sympathy for her loss had seemed real and sincere. With these thoughts forming and glowing in her brain she worked herself into a condition of the highest mental tension. Four o'clock—half-past five—and no Lumley; he who was so true to his word and so punctual. What did it mean? It meant that he had decided against her, and dared not venture to announce the fact face to face.

After this came the agonies of waiting for the postman's knock. No letter, not a line from him. All that night she lay wide awake, thinking for herself, and enduring a torture such as she had never dreamt of; it was ten times worse than mere physical pain. So Lumley was lost to her, as well as her mother. She had not a relation in Europe, and was practically alone in the world.

The following day came and passed with leaden feet. It brought piles of cards of condolence and inquiries. There were letters from dressmakers, milliners, and shops, papers, circulars, notes from acquaintances, legal-looking documents—not a sign from

house, and abandoned her belongings, all her jewellery, including engagement ring, letters, papers, personal possessions, and the will of the late Mrs. Loftus.

Presently the family lawyers came, and dismissed the servants, gave up the house, and set about tracing the heiress. But she seemed to have vanished, as it were, into the air! Lord Nesfield was agreeably and obviously relieved, until he was assured by his son that, unless the lost lady was found, he would never marry; and this statement considerably modified his joy, for Lord Nesfield disliked his next heirs, the Nesfields of Barrow, even more intensely than the idea of a daughter-in-law with *strange* blood in her veins!

Lumley Grantham, after fruitless visits, first to Gloucestershire, and then Lahore, finally set out for New Zealand. Here it took some time tracing a lady, who, three months previously, had landed at Dunedin; but he followed her steps patiently, and at last discovered that she had disappeared among a Maori tribe near Kaiapui. Here he sought the great "pa" of the chief Ramparaha, and found him, the splendid wreck of a fine Maori warrior, wrapped in a cloak of feathers, his head adorned with the plumes of authority, enjoying a long pipe in the door of his abode. Around were various Maori women, young and old, with thick, grizzly black hair, and tall, graceful figures, dressed, as is the present custom, in skirts and blouses, instead of their picturesque native costumes. A few fine, stalwart men were loitering about, smoking and talking. Over them lay the spell of unconquerable indolence—children, dogs, and flies were the only objects endowed with vitality.

In reply to Captain Crantham's question, the chief replied, "Yes, white woman come



"Only that you ask me where Rata is—and she lies there."

Lumley—oh, it was too cruel of him to torture her like this. About five o'clock she relinquished all hope, and made up her mind to act for herself.

Lumley Grantham had taken his bicycle by rail down to Croydon, and started for a long, solitary spin. He always enjoyed his own society, and could not exist without plenty of exercise; and, as he skimmed along the country roads, his brain was hard at work, sorting out the pros and cons of an extremely difficult situation. He was resolved to marry Rata; to that point his mind was anchored—but in deference to his father's sensibilities, he felt that he was bound to do nothing suddenly. He and Rata must wait; time would soften the sharp edge of the shock that his parents had sustained. Rata could travel—she had never seen the Continent—he would run out to South Africa for a few months, and possibly by Christmas—here his bicycle ran over a loose stone—he lost his balance, and fell heavily on his head. An hour later he was found by a farmer's carter, taken to the farm, and there laid, insensible still, under the shade of the best four-poster. A doctor was summoned, and announced slight concussion of the brain, and rest essential; but it was two days before the traveller was fit to return to London. His mother—accustomed to his erratic departures—was only slightly concerned, and hailed his reappearance with relief.

Two days after his appointment he arrived to keep it, but found, to his surprise, that Miss Loftus was not at home, and the household seemed a little upset.

Miss Loftus had departed that morning in a four-wheeler, taking a small box and a bag with her, and leaving her maid without any instructions. She had not mentioned when she proposed to return.

And as it turned out, Miss Loftus never did return. She had walked out of the

here two moons ago—my daughter's daughter, she said, but she was all English—her mother was Tassila the beautiful—who died young. I gave her baby to a lady from Wellington. Twenty years after, the baby comes back to the tribe; but she is a stranger."

"Yes, of course she is," assented his visitor, with emphasis.

"She liked not our food, nor our ways, although we held a Tangi in her honour. She knew not our tongue. She sat all day alone in her hut, and wept, and ate nought, and grew thin, oh, so thin—and then she—as was best—left us."

"Where is she?" inquired Captain Grantham, eagerly, "you know?"

"Oh, yes," gravely nodding his plumed head, "I know."

"And will you take me—will you show me?"

"Why do you seek her?"

"Because she and I were to have been married, and I have come to fetch her back to England."

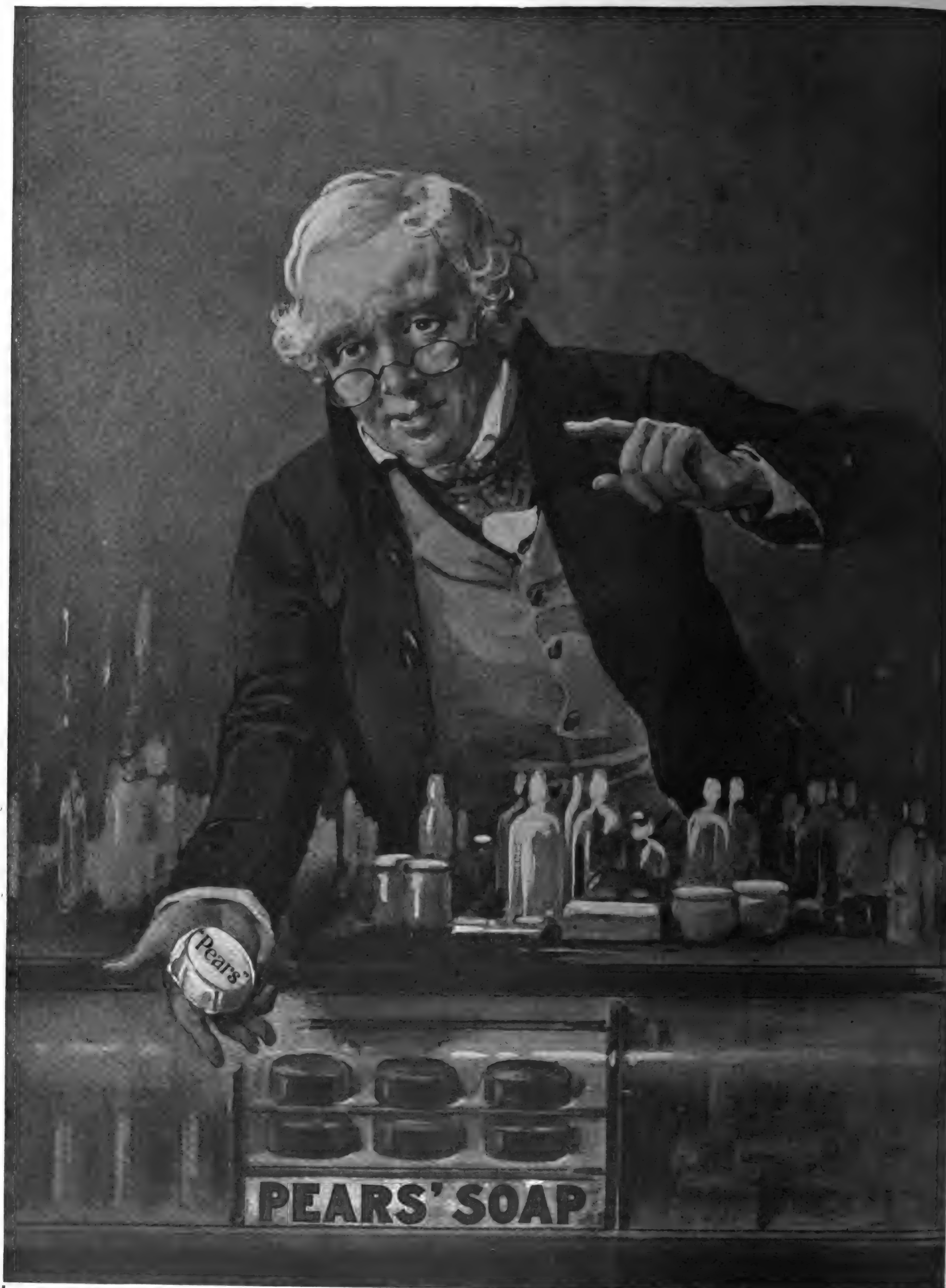
"Ah!" rising stiffly, "and so you were to marry my granddaughter Rata. Then follow me, and I will show you where she is."

And Ramparaha, the lineal descendant of the great Tuahuriri, led the way through the surrounding *raupo*, or scrub, up a very steep hill, from the summit of which was view of considerable extent.

"You see that big lake?" he said, pointing his shrivelled hand towards a melancholy sheet of distant water, in which the mountains were darkly reflected.

"Yes—I see it, of course," answered the Englishman, impatiently, "and what then?"

"Only that you ask me where Rata is—and she lies there."



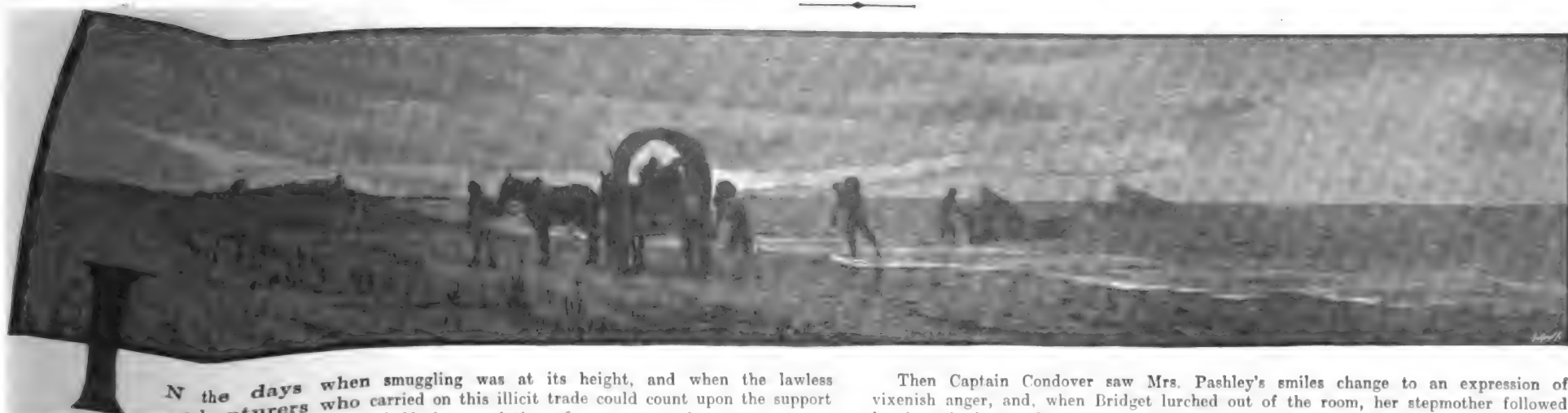
“THIS is the genuine **‘PEARS’** as sold for more than 100 years past! I have sold it all **my** life, and know how good it is. It is entirely **pure** and there is **no water** mixed with it, it is **ALL SOAP** and lasts longer than any other; it is the **CHEAPEST** as well as the **BEST**.

“I could sell you an imitation at half the money and **make more profit on it too**, but I should be only **swindling** you if I did.”

JOCK, THE FREE-TRADER.

By FLORENCE WARDEN, Author of "The House on the Marsh," "The Outlaw," &c.

Illustrated by A. FORESTIER.



N the days when smuggling was at its height, and when the lawless adventurers who carried on this illicit trade could count upon the support and assistance of half the population of our coasts, there was no spot more notorious for wild deeds and daring raids than Romney Marsh, where a long stretch of flat coast, where landing was easy and inhabitants were few, offered a tempting field to the "free-trader."

The exploits of a certain devil-may-care fisherman, who went by the name of Jock, the Free-trader, had become so notorious that the services of the military were called in for the maintenance of order, and a young officer named Condovery, active and energetic, made himself feared and hated throughout the marshes by the success of his efforts to find out the hiding-places of the smugglers, and to check their operations.

Captain Condovery knew very well the amount of love there was for him in most of the breasts of the marshfolk, and when he found himself, one October afternoon, overtaken by a thick sea-fog and unable to see to the right or left, while riding alone between Romney and Hythe, he felt at once that, unless luck were to favour him unexpectedly, he might soon find himself in a dangerous situation.

The whole of the marsh was devoted to the free-traders, and, animated by feelings of hatred against their natural enemies, the King's men and their allies, the military; and as Jock and his friends were not too nice in their treatment of solitary members of the other side who came into their hands, the young officer looked to his pistols when dismounting from his mare, Brown Meg, he proceeded to peer for the lost roadway among the rough grass and weed, stone, and shingle upon which he had strayed.

In vain did he grope and strive to pierce the fog with keen young eyes. It grew thicker; it enveloped him with a clammy mantle of damp, cold and nipping; it made his eyes smart and burn. It brought the cloudy day to a premature end; and, when darkness began to descend upon the land and he was still floundering over shingle and rough marsh-grass, Captain Condovery made up his mind to grope no longer, but to take his chance; and, remounting the mare, he set her in what he judged to be an easterly direction, guided by the faint sound of the sea on his right, and putting her to a trot, went ahead until Meg was brought up suddenly by running her head against the wall of a house.

She had come to little harm, however, and Captain Condovery's first impulse was one of intense relief. His next, however, on finding that the rough, whitewashed wall was that of an inn, was not so pleasant. The inns of the marsh were all the haunts of the smugglers. And this wretched little place, "The Jolly Sailor," although full proof of the fact was yet wanting, was suspected to be the headquarters of Jock and his gang.

It was, therefore, the very last place where a foe of the smugglers could reasonably hope for help in his difficulties. Captain Condovery was not in uniform, but his fine figure and keen grey eyes were well known, and it was in the highest degree unlikely that, if he were to enter the inn, he would remain long unrecognised.

On the other hand, there still lay a couple of miles between him and the end of his journey, the road had no hedges to keep the wayfarer straight, the fog was denser and darker than before, and if he were to start off, at a snail's pace, leading his horse, which was his only chance of keeping to the road, he would offer a fair mark to any evil-disposed person who, watching him from the inn, where his presence was already noted, might follow him under cover of the mist and the twilight.

The landlord, a heavy-faced, sullen-looking fellow, with dull eyes, had come out and saluted him, whether with recognition or not it was impossible to tell.

"You'll put up, sir?" said he, taking the mare by the bridle as he spoke.

Captain Condovery, who had dismounted to find out the amount of injury done to the animal, shook his head.

"What I should like," said he, "is a guide to lead me into Hythe. Not more than a couple of miles, I think?"

"Nearer four nor two, sir, and the road hard to find in this fog, let alone I've no one here as I could send with you," replied Joe Pashley. "You'd best put up here for the night, sir; the marsh be terrible dangerous going when it's as thick as this!"

The young officer shrugged his shoulders and yielded, unwillingly enough, to the force of circumstances. At that moment the landlord's wife, a buxom, smiling person, as sympathetic in appearance as her husband was the reverse, appeared at the inn door and invited the traveller to enter.

"For sure, sir, you'd never trust yourself further in this fog!" said she. "'Tis a providence you got here at all, instead of into the sea, where many a good soul has had a bath he didn't look for in weather like this!"

Captain Condovery had followed her into the bar parlour, which did indeed look cosy and cheerful after his experience outside.

Though his eyes still smarted, he could appreciate the luxury of a Windsor arm-chair with homely red cushions, beside a bright fire. And as Mrs. Pashley drew out a little folding chair and beckoned to a tall girl in the background, he began to congratulate himself on having found food, and rest, and shelter, and to make light of his own doubts and suspicions.

"Bridget, the cloth, quick! Lay the table and get the gentleman something to eat. What say you to cold beef and pickles, sir? 'Tis what we can get quickest, and to be sure you must be nigh famishing."

By this time the girl named Bridget had come slowly and clumsily forward, but, instead of laying the cloth as she had been told to do, she stood stock-still, and stared at the guest with a lowering frown of sullen displeasure and alarm.

The young officer reddened, feeling sure that he was recognised and that the girl was ill-disposed towards him. She was a tall, broad-shouldered young woman, probably not more than eighteen or nineteen years of age, with a well-developed figure, but a heavy and sullen face, in which he saw at once the likeness to her father, Joe Pashley.

But she could not, he thought, be the daughter of Mrs. Pashley, who was certainly not more than thirty or so, and probably a second wife.

Amiable as was her manner to the guest, too, Mrs. Pashley was by no means tender in look or tone as she turned again to the girl, and told her sharply to be more brisk.

Bridget frowned sullenly, and slouching up to the table, still with her eyes fixed on the guest, laid the cloth and slapped the knives and forks down upon it with a manner surly and uncivil in the extreme.

Then Captain Condovery saw Mrs. Pashley's smiles change to an expression of vixenish anger, and, when Bridget lurched out of the room, her stepmother followed her into the bar, and, snatching up a piece of wood from the log-basket, laid it about the girl's shoulders with right good will.

"Take that, and that, and that!" she hissed out under her breath as she administered the blows. The young officer, out of sight of this display of brutality though he was, heard enough to make him sure that something unpleasant was happening. He jumped up, and, half opening the door, looked through the crack and was in time to see the last blow struck, and to see the girl turn, half insolent, half whimpering, as she rubbed her shoulder.

"You be a beast, Mrs. Pashley, that you be, for to treat me like what you do!" she said, between her clenched teeth.

"You be a fool, a born fool, for to stare at yon fellow so he is bound to see you know him!" retorted the landlord's wife with shrewish intonation, though she kept her voice low.

Captain Condovery threw the door wide open. Mrs. Pashley started, and immediately dealt a sounding smack on the girl's cheek.

"Go about your work this moment, and don't keep the gentleman waiting!" cried she.

Bridget stood like a rock, sullen, lowering, with her cheek dead-white and then red from the blow. Mrs. Pashley put up her hand again, but Captain Condovery sprang forward and seized her wrist.

"Stop, woman!" cried he, sternly. "It sickens me to see you treat the girl so!"

"Be sure, sir, 'tis but to punish her for her insolence to you," said the landlord's wife, with sudden alarm and humility.

"Her insolence, if 'tis meant for insolence, does not hurt me in the least. But it hurts me monstrously to see such a blow dealt to a girl," said the Captain, shortly. "Be good enough either to let her take her own time, or else to let me seek other shelter."

"As you please, sir," said Mrs. Pashley, with alarmed return to abject civility. "But it would go to my heart to see you venture forward through the fog."

Then the girl spoke, still sullen, but now with her eyes down and with a lower, less surly tone:

"I'll serve you, sir. Go back to the fire."

Captain Condovery was by no means loth to take this hint, and though she never once looked him again in the face, Bridget began to move about with quicker steps, so that by the time a pair of guttering candles had been placed on the table, when his repast was ended, he felt that, if she was not yet friendly towards him, at least her resentment was modified.

He had heard the entrance of sundry customers, and had been quick to note that, after the first moment of entry into the bar outside, they all made curiously little noise. Such a poor place as the inn was could scarcely boast very refined frequenters, yet there was no shouting, there was no loud laughter, and the young officer, quick to note these things, made up his mind that he would take stock of the house's patrons without delay.

So he left the bar-parlour, followed, as he perceived, by the covert glances of both Mrs. Pashley and Bridget, and crossed the stone passage into the tap-room, where, sitting round with their legs outstretched and their heels on the sanded floor, there was presented to his gaze as forbidding a group of weather-beaten sea-dogs, labourers, and coast-prowlers as the Captain had ever seen.

"Smugglers to a man!" thought he, as he entered and marked the constrained and unnatural civility with which they greeted him, peering up at him the while out of bleared and weather-dimmed eyes.

The illumination afforded by the long-snuffed candles was not dazzling. Nevertheless, he made out that, among the rest, two faces stood out, as those of leaders, among the group.

One of these faces belonged to a short, thick-set personage, ostensibly a fisherman, whose nose was large and red, and who was addressed by the rest with much politeness as "Mr. Burle."

The second was a tall, raw-boned, evil-looking fellow with a protruding lower jaw, who, with equal politeness, was addressed as "Mr. Dawson."

That one of this precious pair was the murderous "Jock," to whose charge more than one death had already been laid, Captain Condovery felt sure.

And, while he sat down with them, inhaled the perfume of the strong "pigtail" they were smoking, and mentally decided that it had paid no duty, the young officer wondered what this milky softness and civility portended, and what pretty little plans were in the making with his own discomfiture for an object.

It was most uncharitable, surely, of him to be so suspicious, for nothing could exceed the eagerness with which they one and all received him as a welcome and an honoured guest, and told tales of wreck and of ruin caused by the thick sea-fogs to which the marsh was subject, with never a word of smuggling and such unlawful doings.

While taking his part in the conversation and appearing as innocent as any of them of any covert intention, Captain Condovery was well on his guard against surprise, and took care to carry out strictly his "doctor's orders" to him not to drink much.

So careful was he on this point that he scarcely more than put his lips to the tankard before him. He had heard of the drugging of suspected persons, and he was resolved that, if the time were to come when a change would come over the demeanour of his odd-looking companions, he would make a fight for it.

But no such idea appeared to enter their heads, and all would have gone well if, when Mr. Burle was delighting the company with a ditty of which the salient features were strong language and entire absence of tune, the cupboard on the right of the hearth had not suddenly burst open, and a rough-looking fellow with a greasy sailor's tassel cap had not thrust his head and half his body up through the floor, exclaiming as he did so:

"Give us a hand wi' the stuff, lads!"

The interruption was most unlucky. "Mr. Dawson" covered the incident as well as he could, by interposing his person between the intruder and Captain Condovery, and

asking what the so-and-so and so-and-so the former was doing in the cupboard. But it was obvious to the most innocent that the man had only been half in the cupboard and half in some cavity underneath it; so that, although the young officer affected to take no notice, but to continue the interrupted applause between the verses of the song, the company were not deceived as to the insight he had gained into a knowledge which was one of their vital secrets.

The King's men had long suspected that "The Jolly Sailor" had a secret hiding-place for smuggled goods; now the secret was out.

There was a sort of pause, during which Captain Condoover was left to applaud all by himself. And then he was quick to note a certain growing restlessness, a hush which was portentous, and a change in the demeanour of the men. Evidently they felt that their best behaviour was now thrown away.

Only Mr. Burle and Mr. Dawson remained civil and calm, and Captain Condoover's curiosity grew as to which of the two was the redoubtable Jock.

Pleading his fatigue, the young officer, afraid lest a quarrel should be trumped up on his account and an opportunity be found to attack him at a disadvantage during the fray, took the first opportunity to retire. He was conducted up a narrow staircase by Bridget, who, as sulky and taciturn as ever, jerked her head in the direction of a door near on the right, and, thrusting a tin candlestick with a smoking candle into his hand, said simply: "Yon's your room," and disappeared downstairs.

He entered the bedroom indicated and carefully locked the door. It was an apartment furnished in the simplest fashion, with common painted wooden bedstead and chests and chairs, and comfortably free from hangings or other hiding-places.

Nevertheless, knowing what he knew and guessing what he guessed, Captain Condoover not only made a careful but resultless examination of the room, but examined his pistols and laid them beside him when he threw himself, fully dressed, upon the bed to get what sleep he could.

He was awakened by feeling a touch on his shoulder, and, springing up, he instinctively stretched out his hand for his pistols, before he discovered the fact that the person standing beside the bed, candlestick in hand, was a woman.

She put her hand upon his mouth and said "Hush!" almost under her breath, at the first exclamation he uttered.

It was Bridget, heavy-looking, stolid as before, but not perhaps quite so forbidding of aspect as she had previously been.

By this time he was on his feet, wide awake, staring at her in blank amazement, his pistol still in his right hand.

"How did you get in?" cried he, also in a low voice, as he glanced at the door, knowing well that he had locked himself in.

"Never mind that," she replied, in a very low whisper. "You listen to what I've got to say. You're not safe here; you've got to come out along o' me. Make haste."

But Captain Condoover was not inclined to accept the invitation, which was given in no very seductive manner. He knew that this girl was heart and soul with the smugglers, that she had resented even the small trouble of waiting upon himself, because she knew who he was; and, the manner of her entry into his room being in the highest degree suspicious, he felt no desire to venture in her company into unknown dangers.

"Thanks for your kind advice," said he, rather drily. "But I was well aware before you came that this is no place for honest travellers to lie at their ease. I can look to myself, and I shall remain here till morning and take all risks."

He was looking, as he spoke, to his pistols by the light of the tallow candle she carried. But Bridget was as determined as he.

"You must come with me," she repeated doggedly. "There be two fellows in the house now who mean to settle your accounts before day breaks. So go you must." She

pointed with a jerk of the head, sullenly, to the door, and then went on, craning her neck towards him and dropping her voice still lower: "If you don't leave the room at once, I'll set fire to the bed and smoke you out, my fine gentleman!"

And, suiting the action to the word, she held the flame so close to the bedclothes that he smelt the singeing.

So he shrugged his shoulders and made her a bow of mock courtesy.

"A woman must have her way," said he, not very gratefully. "And to be sure I can be in little more danger elsewhere than I am here, where I can be intruded upon so mysteriously."

Bridget uttered a short, stifled laugh as Captain Condoover, passing through the doorway, stopped and discovered, with an uncanny feeling down his back, that the lock of the door was made in so ingenious a fashion that a push from the outer side displaced a little wedge of wood that held it, and rendered entrance easy.

He said nothing, for he felt convinced that a house where such contrivances were in use was a hotbed of peril, that argument was out of place, and that the only thing to be used was caution.



Mrs. Pashley put up her hand again, but Captain Condoover sprang forward and seized her wrist.

So, looking carefully about him, he waited on the landing till Bridget followed him out of the room, and then let her precede him down the stairs.

Her footfall was as light as a cat's, and he himself was careful to make little more noise than she, even though he said to himself that such a guide was not greatly to be trusted. At the foot of the stairs she turned and waited for him, standing back a little to make way for him to come down. Then she opened a door which led to the rear of the inn, and blew out her candle.

At once Captain Condoover backed against the wall, feeling sure that this was the signal for the entrance of the men who were to attack him.

But all he heard when she opened the door was the girl's breathing, and then her whisper:

"You must come outside."

It was quite dark, and the fog was still thick. Captain Condoover listened keenly as he obeyed her direction, and stepped out upon the uneven flagstones of the inn-yard. He heard the faint sound of men's voices, and at once he took a step backward, with the conviction that the girl was indeed, as he had from the first suspected, leading him not out of, but into danger.

But already he had lost his bearings, and the girl said impatiently:

"To the left, to the left. Step out!"

He obeyed. Having gone so far, he might as well go on to the end. If she was leading him into a trap, as seemed most probable, it was at least certain that he had been less safe than he supposed in his bedroom.

Walking on blindly, he became suddenly conscious that he was under a roof again, and then he heard the girl's whisper:

"Stop!"

His eyes were getting used to the obscurity, and he made out that he was in a shed or stable, in a corner of which stood an ancient waggon, and part of the floor of which gave a hollow sound as he trod.

At the same moment he heard the voices of men more plainly. They were still outside, but coming nearer. He seized Bridget by the shoulder.

"You've led me into a trap!" said he.

The girl, not raising her voice, uttered a sort of sullen laugh:

"Think so if you like," said she, surlily.

Before he could make any rejoinder, the men outside were near enough for Captain Condoover to recognise the voices of "Mr. Burle" and "Mr. Dawson." The girl whispered quickly in his ear, while at the same time she pushed him further into the shed:

"You must hide yourself. There's a cellar under here. I will open the door for you, and then you must step down, down."

With these words she passed him, a trap-door was thrown back suddenly at his feet,



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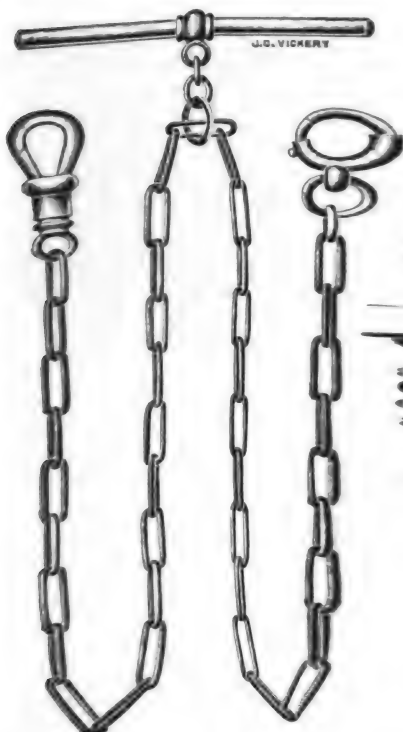
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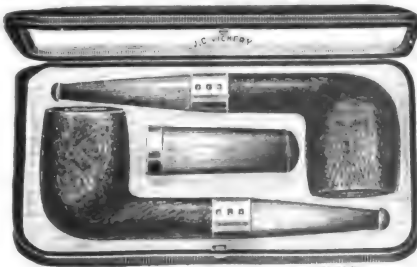
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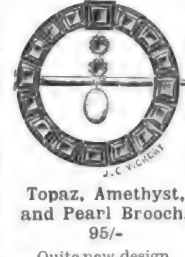
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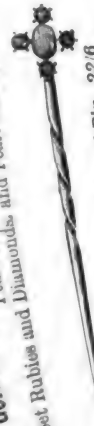
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and Bridget's strong hand pulled him towards it. The voice of the man whom they had called "Mr. Burle" sounded close to the wall of the shed:

"Ready with your knives, lads, in case he be awake, and show a mind to fight!"

Captain Condoover, realising at once that the girl was indeed his friend, in spite of her sullen aspect, obeyed her direction and stepped down into the cellar by means of the strong wooden steps below the trap-door.

The men had passed out of hearing, entering the inn by the back, when Bridget, who had noiselessly shut down the trap-door, opened it again and spoke from above.

"Stay there," she hissed out, still in the same surly tones, "and don't make any sound. If they should come down, hide yourself; there's stuff enough about you could creep under."

"Tell me one thing," said the young officer, standing on the steps below and keeping his voice to a whisper: "Which of those two ruffians is Jock?"

"Mr. Burle," replied she, promptly. "And he'd cut your throat, or any other man's, for a guinea. So keep out of his way, and don't come up till the day breaks. By then the fog will have cleared, I think, and you can get to the stable, yonder at the back. Saddle your horse as quick as you can, and be gone with you."

And with that she shut down the trap-door, and he heard her footsteps as she went out of the shed.

A few minutes later there came another sound to his listening ears. And he knew that the ruffians who had meant to murder him as he slept were coming downstairs, that they were out of the inn, and in hot pursuit of himself. He heard swearing and cursing, and the voice of Bridget, shriller and sharper than theirs, all in one indistinguishable hubbub.

At once, as in duty bound, he gave full information to the revenue officers of the existence at "The Jolly Sailor" of secret stores for smuggled goods, and of the fact that it was evidently a headquarters of the illegal traffic.

He himself took no part in the raid which was instituted, as his duties carried him on to Dover and Deal. But he soon learned that, quick as the authorities were to take the clue given them, Jock the Free-trader and his associates were quicker still.

When the revenue officers reached "The Jolly Sailor," and made straight to the cellar, with its openings on one side into the shed and on the other into the cupboard of the tap-room, all they found there was a little straw, a dead cat, and a quantity of most innocent firewood.

But Bridget, the landlord's step-daughter, had disappeared.

The young officer heard this last piece of news with much disquietude. Though nobody in the inn seemed to give the girl's disappearance a thought, and it was explained that she had gone away to be married, the fear that the girl had met with foul play on account of her interference on his behalf, at the hands of the ruffianly smugglers, caused Captain Condoover many an uneasy hour. He grew sentimental over the sullen girl with the forbidding manner and coarse voice, who had saved his life and perhaps sacrificed her own as the price of her generous act.

It was months before he heard a word of her or her fate. Then one day, when he was again in the marsh neighbourhood, riding with his troop through one of the little straggling villages, he uttered a cry of astonishment and delight on recognising, at the door of one of the outlying cottages, Bridget herself, as sullen of face as ever, hanging up garments on a clothes-line to dry in the morning wind.

Sending his men on ahead, and with quite a tender look in his eyes, the handsome



Holding out his hand, pressed that of the brave girl in his own.

Captain Condoover crawled up the wooden steps, pushed up the trap-door, and listened. Were the men going to turn upon her for her share in his escape? He drew one of his pistols from his belt, and prepared to sally out in defence of the woman who had incurred the displeasure of the rascals to save his life.

But before he could emerge from his hiding-place a shrill, if rather forced, laugh burst from the girl's lips, and she cried out:

"You pair of fools, to stand there wasting your time! Go look for him. Search the marsh. Crawl on your knees and hunt in every corner of the barns yonder."

The man whom he had known as "Mr. Burle," and whom the young officer now knew to be Jock the Free-trader, uttered a sort of snarling laugh.

"Oons, my dear," said he, "since you've got wit enough to direct us, you may help us in our search. Come along, Bridget, my lass, come along with us."

The girl attempted to resist, but finally gave way with a sullen laugh.

"Faith, I hope you don't think I would have aught to say to a King's man?" said she, in her usual surly tones.

"Maybe ay, and maybe no, my dear. But we'll make sure," said Jock.

And while Captain Condoover was still debating with himself whether chivalry demanded that she should act as a knight errant or whether interference on his part would be looked upon by the damsel herself as uncalled for, the whole group made off rapidly, and were soon out of hearing.

The time seemed long as Captain Condoover waited, with the trap-door uplifted, till the darkness slowly became dawn. Neither the men nor the girl had come again within hearing, and he was anxious as well on Bridget's account as on his own, conscious though he was that the weaker sex was not, in this case, either very guileless or very helpless.

The fog had cleared away by the time the early dawn came, and he was able to find his way to the stable without much difficulty. Here he carried out the girl's instructions to the letter, saddled the mare, and rode off to Hythe, which he reached, without further incident, before the day was fully come.

Captain flung himself off his horse, and, holding out his hand, pressed that of the brave girl in his own.

Bridget reddened, but was rather mocking than sweet in her greeting.

"How I've longed to see you and thank you for your brave act!" murmured he, as he bent towards her, unmindful of the armful of wet clothes she was carrying.

"'Twas naught," said she, uneasily, with a look round as if she feared onlookers.

"Nay, you must let me speak. You are safe now," said he. "Tell me, 'tis true you are now married? To someone who deserves a brave wife, I trust?"

She looked at him askance and shrugged her heavy shoulders ill-humouredly.

"Ay, he's well enough," said she, shortly.

"And tell me, how did you escape from those rascals that night? From Jock and the other ruffian who wanted to murder me?" he went on eagerly.

She stared at him and replied slowly:

"Jock be the ruffian I've married."

Captain Condoover felt that he could scarcely breathe. When he had recovered from his amazement a little, he said, in a slightly less enthusiastic voice:

"Then what on earth, since you were going to marry him, did you save my life for?"

Bridget's heavy face showed a gleam of light. She answered composedly:

"Faith, Captain, I know Jock is bound to come nigh hanging some day or another. And when he does, 'tis as well he should have a friend at court! So mind you of what I say, and when he next deserves the gallows, for my sake do your best to let him go free!"

With which injunction, delivered with perfect seriousness, Bridget walked off with her clothes on her arm; and Captain Condoover, pensive and a trifle dismayed, remounted his horse and rode off in silence.

He was conscious of having taken part in a romance, but he did not quite know what to make of his heroine!

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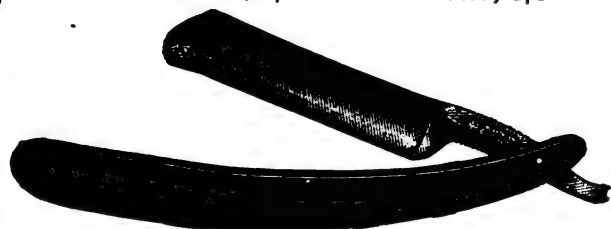
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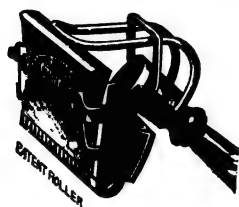
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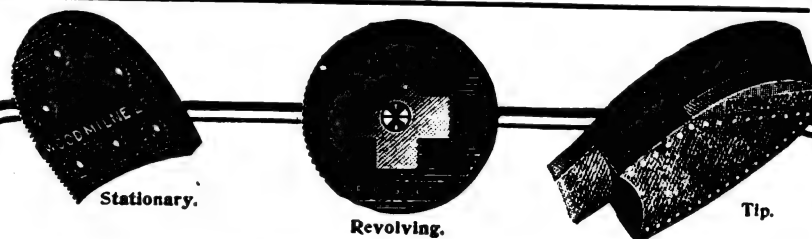
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OUR CAPTIOUS CRITIC.

A YULETIDE DIALOGUE.—By ARTHUR CLEMENTS. ILLUSTRATED BY THOS. DOWNEY.



"Who is this that mounts my stair?"

THE MAN.
 "WHO is this that mounts my stair
 With so confident an air?—
 Who, not knocking at my door,
 Just walks in and takes the floor?
 Who is there should make so free—
 Canvasser with pound of tea?—
 Lady scribe for interview?—
 Man for rates—those rates! Eheu!
 None of these. But—worse than all—
 CHRISTMAS on his annual call!—
 Can't be told to go away—
 Must be welcomed—*pressed* to stay!
 How I'd like to, if I dared,
 Tell him that he could be spared!
 For though oft the days are slow,
 Yet the years too quickly go.
 Would that I might muster pluck—
 Speak him straight and chance my luck!
 Almost sure he'd take it ill,
 Still I think I really will:—

"Dear old Boy, 'twould be a boon
 Came you not again so soon;
 Sure 'tis not a twelvemonth past
 'Twixt this visit and the last.
 Scarce conceding time to turn—
 Last year's ashes to inurn,
 Last year's failures to repair,
 Last year's castles in the air,
 Last year's losses to forget—
 Last year's bills have scarce been met;
 Ere in fact we've started fair,
 Hang it all, again you're there!"

THE VISITOR.
 "Maybe, Mr. What's-your-name,
 That I *am* a bit to blame
 Not for all the griefs you tell,
 But the fault of MEANING WELL!
 There, I know, 'tis quite agreed,
 I my duty may exceed.
 Broadly I admit that I'm
 Sent to point the march of Time—
 Milestones for the route ahead—
 Gravestones of the journey sped—
 Not a lively task, you'll own,
 If I stuck to that alone.
 'Tis no pleasure here to come,
 Out of Winter—where there's some—
 Garbed in furs and crusted snows,
 Into damp and things like those;
 Stifling in the foggy air,
 Panting in the things I wear.
 If I find you thick with bills,
 Slumps and nerves and other ills—
 Got what time I am away—
 And I try to make you gay
 For a moment as I pass,
 Do not sneer, it isn't class.
 I've my task as well as you,
 Let us join and *both* get through.
 If you jib at all the rest,
 Try to meet me as a GUEST.
 Let me bring you, if I may,
 One, at least, unruffled day.
 Let me freshen heart and mind,
 Friendships stir that lag behind,
 Banish envy's cloud or blight,
 Soothe the rankling wrong or slight,
 And begin the coming lap
 With a lightened handicap."

THE MAN.
 "Yes, I know. 'Tis very fine!—
 Ask the folk you hate to dine!
 Eyes all smile and face all sheen,
 Handshakes that you do not mean,
 Cards pretending white is black,
 Gifts, expecting others back!
 Don't be cross—But own up, pray,
 Isn't it a little—eh?"

THE VISITOR.

"Not quite proper, you would say,
 Feeling grim and seeming gay.
 No!—I hold the other view:
 Overwhelm the cloud in blue—
 Don't the sun tone down his spot,
 And the moon her crater-dot?
 Nature tells us left and right,
 Keep your bright side most in sight.
 Think you it's all fun to me,
 What I was and what I be!"



"Christmas on his annual call!"

THEN with trumpet and with song,
 Welcomed by a merry throng,
 Baroned beef and wassail-bowl,
 Kindly words and gracious dole.
 Now you treat me more and more
 Part as fraud and part as bore,
 And my privileges dock;
 At my very waits you mock!



"At my very waits
 you mock!"



"Handshakes that you
 do not mean."



"Into damp and things like those."

And your precious Christmas cheer!—
 Is it not—confess now—queer?—
 Foreign meat by sea and rail,
 Goose from Russia, lank and pale,
 Soup from tin, and fish from ice,
 Wine at *Entente Cordiale* price;
 If there's British fare in these,
 Give me stout and bread
 and cheese."

THE MAN.

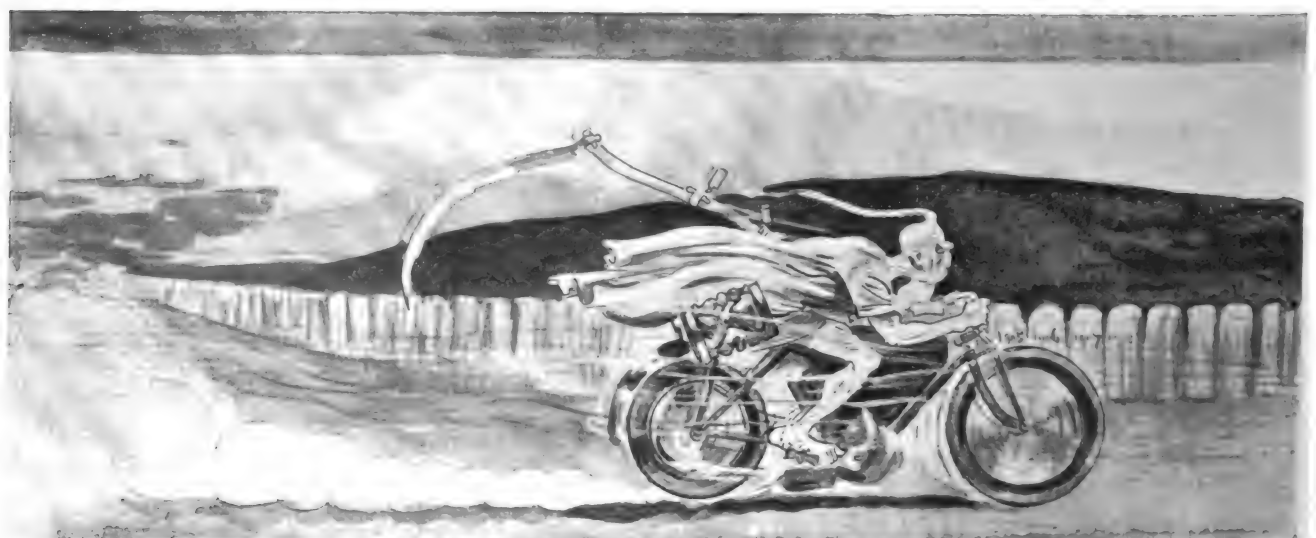
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THE VISITOR.

"Oh, indeed!
 Nay, sir, 'tis the monster
 SPEED.
 SPEED the passion, SPEED
 the vice,
 Hurry-scurry at all price.
 Every action made a
 race—
 LIFE itself at motor pace.
 Hurry-scurry News—not
 right;
 Hurried marriage, hur-
 ried flight;
 Hurried travel, hurried
 smash;
 Hurried wealth, and hur-
 ried crash;
 SPEED that keeps you at a
 strain,
 Banging heart and jerk-
 ing brain;
 SPEED that would out-
 travel Thought!
 SPEED the maddened Jug-
 gernaut!!
 SPEED upon a demon ride!!!
 All things else must go aside;
 All things? No. Do WHAT YOU WILL,
 CHRISTMAS MUST BE CHRISTMAS STILL."



"Foreign meat by sea
 and rail."



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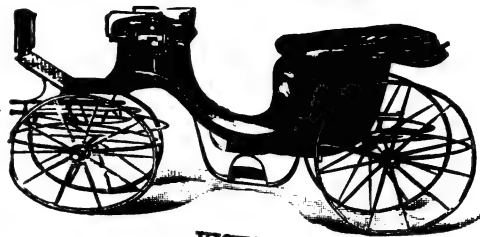
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THE VINDICATION OF JOHN MINDEN.

By ALBANY DE FONBLANQUE. Illustrated by J. W. HAMMICK.

I WAS on a visit to Lington Manor—A.D. 1583. I fell asleep soon after my head touched the pillow, and I do not know how long I remained peacefully in the Land of Nod when something happened. Did I wake up, or did I become conscious of a dream? That I am unable to decide even now. The room was full of light, which enabled me to notice that the window shutters were closed and the curtains drawn. I could not see any lamp, and the fire had gone out. I heard no movement, but in one of the most modern and most seductive arm-chairs, drawn to the side of my bed, sat facing me a figure which might have been Sir Peter Teazle (in the person of Mr. W. Farren), dropped in to have a chat between the acts of *A School for Scandal*.

I sat up, rubbed my eyes, and asked, "Am I dreaming?" I did not address this question to my visitor. I did not even speak it to myself; I only *thought* it; but he answered me. "If you are good enough to consult my convenience," he said, politely, "you will assume that you are. Most persons in your position jump out of bed and scream; some cover up their heads in the clothes and bid me begone. A person who called himself a man of science slept here not so very long ago. He saw me with his eyes, he heard me with his ears, and he had the effrontery to tell me to my face that I was a *Delusion*! Such treatment is most disheartening.

"Who—o—o?" I began to stammer. "Never mind," he interrupted, with a graceful gesture. "I am made up of several things which cannot be explained. I am part of you, for example. This (looking round him) was once my own bed-chamber, but, strange to say, I cannot visit it unless it be occupied by some one else. What is this stuff they have stuck up on the walls? And these sofas, and cupboards with looking-glass doors, and—dear me! Is this utensil a bath? (I assented.) And a writing-table! What do you want with such things as these in a sleeping apartment?"

I ventured to state that they had become the fashion.

"Ah, yes!" he sighed, "and fashion must prevail. I know that to my cost. But it makes me feel quite strange. Suppose you were to come back—to go, I mean, to some place with every object in which you had once been familiar, and where you had spent some happy days, and found nothing, absolutely nothing, that you could recognise—would not you feel strange and sad?"

"No doubt," I submitted, "there must be a great alteration."

"How great," he replied, solemnly, "you shall judge for yourself presently. But really it is most inconsiderate of me to trouble you with such purely personal matters. The sight of all this—novelty has upset me a little, and I do not care to stay. So, my good and brave friend, the only friend I have found since—ah well! Let that pass. Will you promise me that you will do what I ask?"

"If"—I began. "There is no 'if' about it," he broke in somewhat petulantly. "You have only to remember what you hear and see, and act as your conscience bids you. A great and cruel mistake has been made about Jack Minden."

I repeated "Jack Minden," to get the name correctly.

"Yes! We played together as boys, and that is why I cannot help thinking of him sometimes as 'Jack,' though he was of humble birth, and became my valet in after life. Like many old servants, he grew to be somewhat despotic towards the end; was testy and loose of tongue when he was angered. I am afraid that I had a temper, too, and tried his patience, but for all that he was an honest fellow, and he loved me."

"Excuse me," I said, glancing at the sword, and ruffles, and peruke of a generation long passed away, "but is John Minden in need of a character at present?"

"No. He is known to be what I have said of him. It is his memory here on earth that must be cleared of stain."

"Would you mind telling me," I asked, "what he did—or rather did *not* do to require this vindication?"

"He was innocent of the crime for which he was hanged!"

"Hanged!" I repeated. "That is serious."

"Very serious. Poor wretches, who stole to the value of a shilling, were executed in his time, but he suffered for wilful murder."

"And the actual murderer escaped?"

"Escaped" is too large a word to use in this connection," he observed, gravely. The cross-examination instinct came up strong within me.

"Do you know who the real criminal was?" I asked.

"I do," he replied, covering his face with one hand and leaning its elbow on the arm of the chair as a man will do in deep distress of mind.

"Did you know this at the time?" I went on.

"I did"—with a sob.

"Then why on earth, man," I exclaimed, "did you not offer yourself as a witness at the trial, and say so?"

"I could not," he said, slowly raising his face, "I could not. I was dead: *Poor Jack was hanged for murdering me.*"

Then it was that cold, numb HORROR snatched all my senses from me.

After a while—how long I cannot say—I gradually became aware that under some influence coming from my visitant (who no longer inspired me with dread), I was

becoming part of him, with a keen sense of pity and sympathy for my own (partially obliterated) self as though we had exchanged personalities, and that it was I who knew all about the wrong which had been done to John Minden, and it was my duty to exonerate him. Above all came a cheering sense of being under powerful protection, and a prescience which disarmed surprise at the awful scene I was to witness. I knew beforehand what would come, and felt sure that its coming meant no harm for me.

The new room became an old room. The bed in which I had slept was gone, and a large four poster of the type one finds at Hampton Court took its place. But there was no one in that bed. The man who had been born in it, whose ancestors for generations had died in it, lay half undressed in the middle of the floor on his back with a broken rapier sticking out of a red stain on the left side of his shirt front.

And the face upturned to the moonlight was the face of my visitant!

A corner of the tapestry was lifted, and a man and a woman came in stealthily, the latter with a common clasp knife in her hand. It seemed as though they had arranged already what had to be done, for they lost no time in doing it. The man knelt down beside the corpse, drew out the broken rapier, and, taking the knife from his companion, tried to fit it into the wound. But his hand trembled. "Drive it home, fool!" hissed the woman; "Drive it in as you did the other." With averted face he tried to do her bidding, but failed. With that she set her foot on the end of the haft and stamped the blade in. Then she picked up the broken pieces of the real death weapon, wiped them carefully, and burned the napkin she used in the embers of the grate.

"Any gentleman may accidentally break his sword," she said, handing him the fragments. "They will seek no further when John Minden's knife is found."

I woke in the morning with the sensation that something unusual had happened, but could not at once recall what it was. It came back, bit by bit, as dreams will do, and became very vivid. I took a good look all round the room. I had no recollection of having placed an arm-chair at the side of my bed, but there it was. I noticed that the fireplace was set back in an alcove, and was struck by the unusual shape of the windows. They were much wider, and not half as high as the general construction of the room demanded. I thought of the long, narrow casement of the room in my vision, and wondered. As I went out I saw that there was a dark passage some six to eight feet long between the door of the room and that of the corridor which led to it. This was sober, unsophisticated Elizabethan. I wondered again why one room should be arranged in such marked contrast to its surroundings.

I found my host waiting for me in the hall with evident anxiety. "Have you had a good night's rest?" he asked, quickly, without any "Good morning," or "How are you?" When we entered the breakfast-room the face of my hostess brightened up with more than her usual geniality as she exclaimed, "Oh, you don't look a bit as though—" she broke off at a warning look from her husband, became incoherent, and smashed a tea-cup. Now all I had said to my host in the hall was that I had had a very strange dream. We were sixteen strong (mostly young people) at table, so that this little slip was soon covered by the usual clatter and chatter.

We three most interested had it out afterwards in the small library by ourselves, and this was the story told to me, excluding interruptions and some unnecessary details.

In the early days of George III., the Lord of the Manor of Lington was one Stephen Glave—a studious man and confirmed bachelor, until, during a visit to London, when he was in his fiftieth year, he was fascin-

ated by a beautiful Italian dancer, and married her. Their after life was one bitter wrangle—he clinging to his old quiet habits, she insisting upon excitement and pleasure. What else had she married him for? Against his body servant, John Minden, she conceived a violent hatred, suspecting him, and not without cause, of keeping his master informed about certain things which, from her point of view, should have been left unmentioned. By no threats could she prevent John Minden from standing up for his master, and by no cajoleries could she induce his master to part with him. She insulted her neighbours because they would not visit her, and brought company from London, whose manners shocked the whole countryside. Deprived of their society, she took to drink. Such a life became unbearable to peace-loving, gentle Stephen Glave. He plucked up heart and ended it. They separated without any new scandal, she returning to the London life she loved on a liberal allowance, which she spent in company with a fine gentleman of infamous character, who for a time had deplored her marriage. But this provision proved inadequate to provide for their joint requirements, and they quarrelled over it. The position was thus. So far as they could ascertain, Stephen Glave had not revoked the will which he had made in his wife's favour at their marriage; still, he might do so any day. He was rich, but, having some knowledge of what was going on, he sternly refused to increase her income. She would be better off as a widow with only her dower than as now. Stephen Glave was clearly in the way. John Minden was backing his master up, and finding out (through a brother who lived in London) more and more unpleasant truths. If any fatal accident (?) happened to the Lord of Lington Manor, one of these plotters was sure that she would rather have a blood-bond on the scent than John Minden. Any arrangement, therefore, by which master and man might



"A corner of the tapestry was lifted, and a man and woman came in stealthily."



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cease to be in the way *together*, would be highly beneficial. And such an arrangement was made.

The pair were seen in the vicinity of the Manor House on the very morning of the murder, but the circumstantial evidence against John Minden was so strong that no notice was taken of this fact. Shortly before the fatal day he had been overheard to say to his master, in an angry tone, "I wish that one of us were dead." To which the latter replied, "And if you had the choice, I suppose it would be me?" "You're right, by God!" cried the old servant, in a rage.

The Lord of the Manor was found dead in his bedroom with Minden's knife in his heart. And so violent was the stab, as it then appeared, that even part of the handle was found to have penetrated his flesh.

At the trial the covert threat contained in the words above quoted was given in evidence against the prisoner, and when he protested that he had not meant them, the judge (after the manner of that day) called him a "lying rogue." He afterwards told the jury to look at him (the man in the dock) and note what a vile and ungrateful wretch he was. Called upon for what he had to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, he reiterated his defence, and added that he loved his old master, and would not hurt a hair of his head. "No," said the judge, "you stuck your knife into his heart—that was more to your purpose."

So John Minden went to the gallows amidst the execrations of a mob, and was afterwards hung in chains on a gibbet erected at four cross roads within sight of the scene of his (supposed) crime.

In the meanwhile Mrs. Glave, accompanied by her lawyer and a bodyguard, appeared at Friars' Lington to take possession, but the Manor House was already occupied by the heir-at-law, who informed her that there was a new will under which she had no interest at all, and that nothing remained for her but her dower. A riot ensued, in which two men were killed, and she had to fly the country.

The old house got an evil name and remained vacant for several years. An ancestor of my friend and host bought it, and every now and then the story of its being haunted cropped up and scattered the servants. A Fellow of the Royal Society (evidently the "man of science" mentioned by my visitor), who volunteered to sleep in the incriminated room, did so, and confessed that he had passed an uncomfortable night. But he would not reveal what had made it so. He talked volubly but vaguely about pre-

occupations, unconscious cerebration, and the influence of surroundings; and, at his advice, my friend built a very modern room *inside* the old one, so as to create a new and cheerful moral atmosphere. And the doubtful honour of being its first tenant was reserved for me.

"All this," said my host, ruefully, "cost me nearly two thousand pounds, and for nothing. If what happened to you were not a nightmare, we are just where we were, minus the hope that the thing might be got rid of."

Here the superior acuteness of his wife came in. "I don't agree with you at all, Frank," she said; "I think we have made an immense advance. Thanks to Mr. X—, admirable presence of mind and bravery (remembering the abject terror into which I had been plunged I acknowledged the compliment with a sickly smile), this mystery is in a fair way to be solved. By means of a dream, or a vision, or a visitation—call it what you like—poor, dear old Stephen Glave has got a hearing at last, and I believe that everything he said, or caused Mr. X— to see, is true. John Minden's good name—I am sure he was a good man, for all his bad temper and his hasty words—must be restored, and his memory vindicated."

And she had her way.

It was no use going to the Home Office with a ghost story. The wisdom of our legislators has not provided a means whereby the innocence of the wrongfully condemned can be established. Victims of the law's mistakes may be pardoned for what they have not done, but even this is impracticable when they are dead. The law had killed John Minden's body and his reputation, too, and could no more revive the one than the other. All that could be done was done, firmly and generously. His descendants (old people now) were brought back to the house in Friars' Lington, from which their forbears had been hooted. A carefully worded paragraph was published in the local papers to the effect that grave doubts had arisen as to the guilt of "the deceased." Such of his remains as could be found in the ditch, into which they had been flung when the rusted chains of the gibbet could hold them no longer, were collected, and given decent burial in consecrated ground. And a tablet was erected in the church to his memory, in which he was described as

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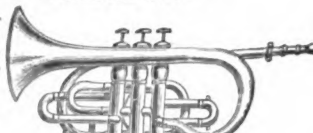
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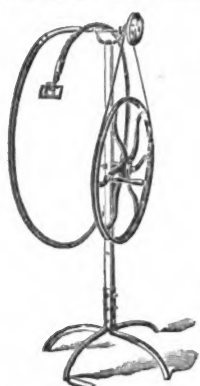
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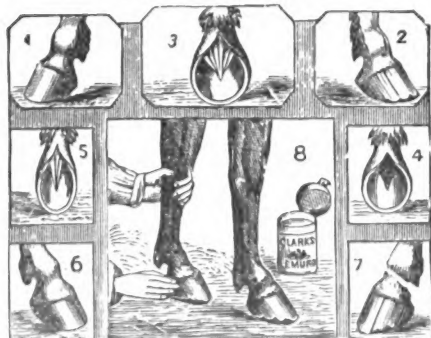
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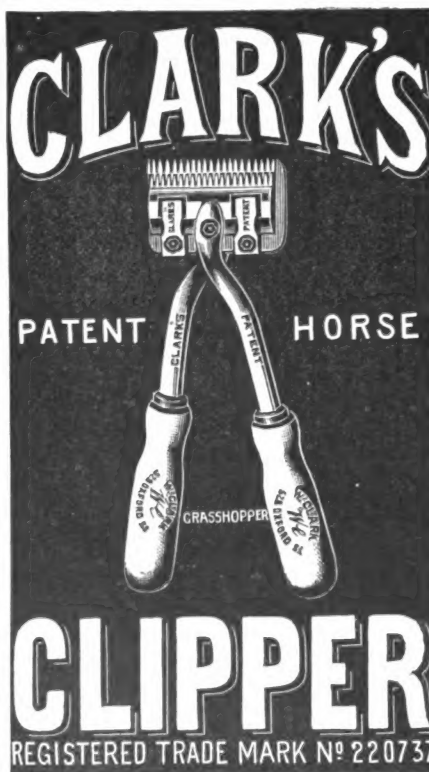
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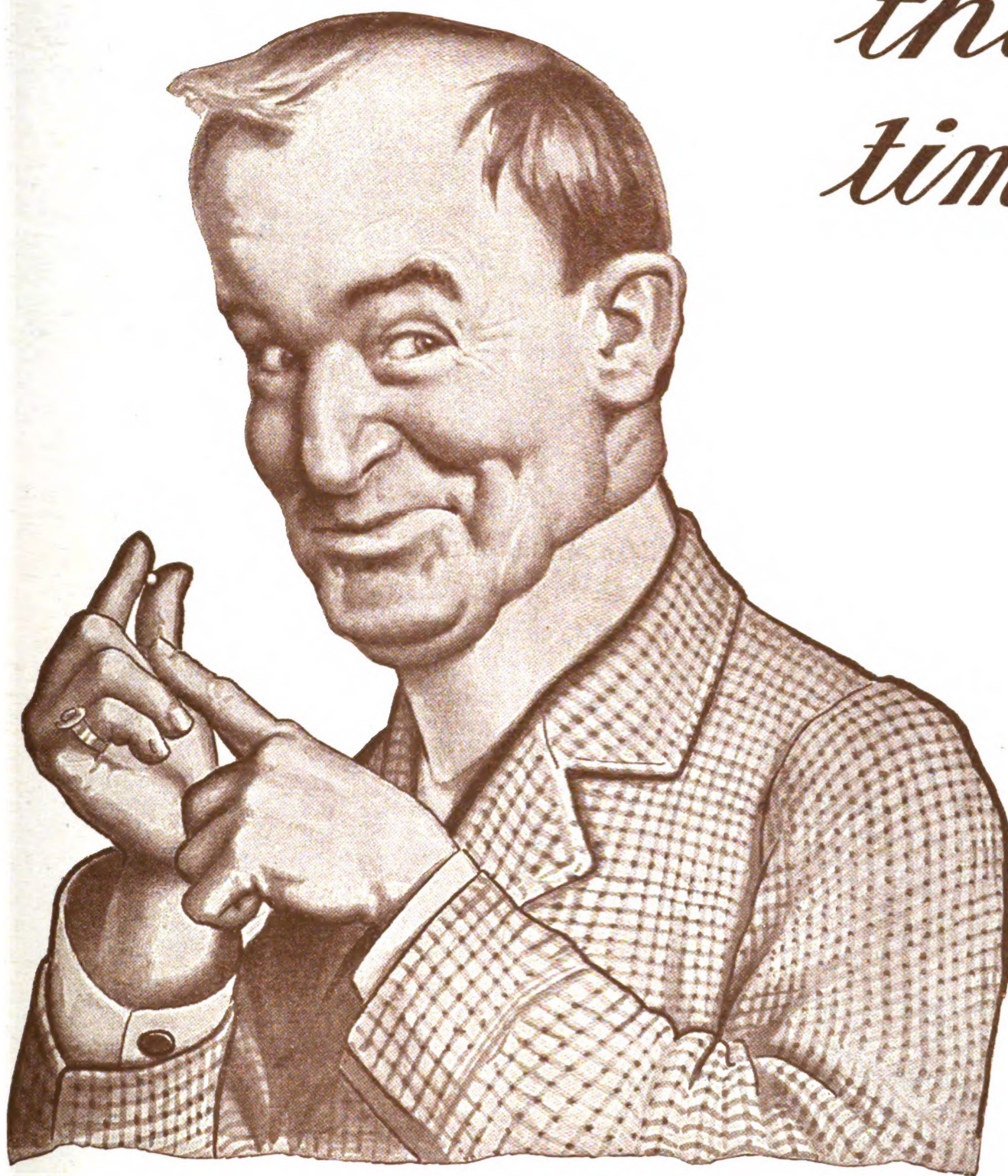
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